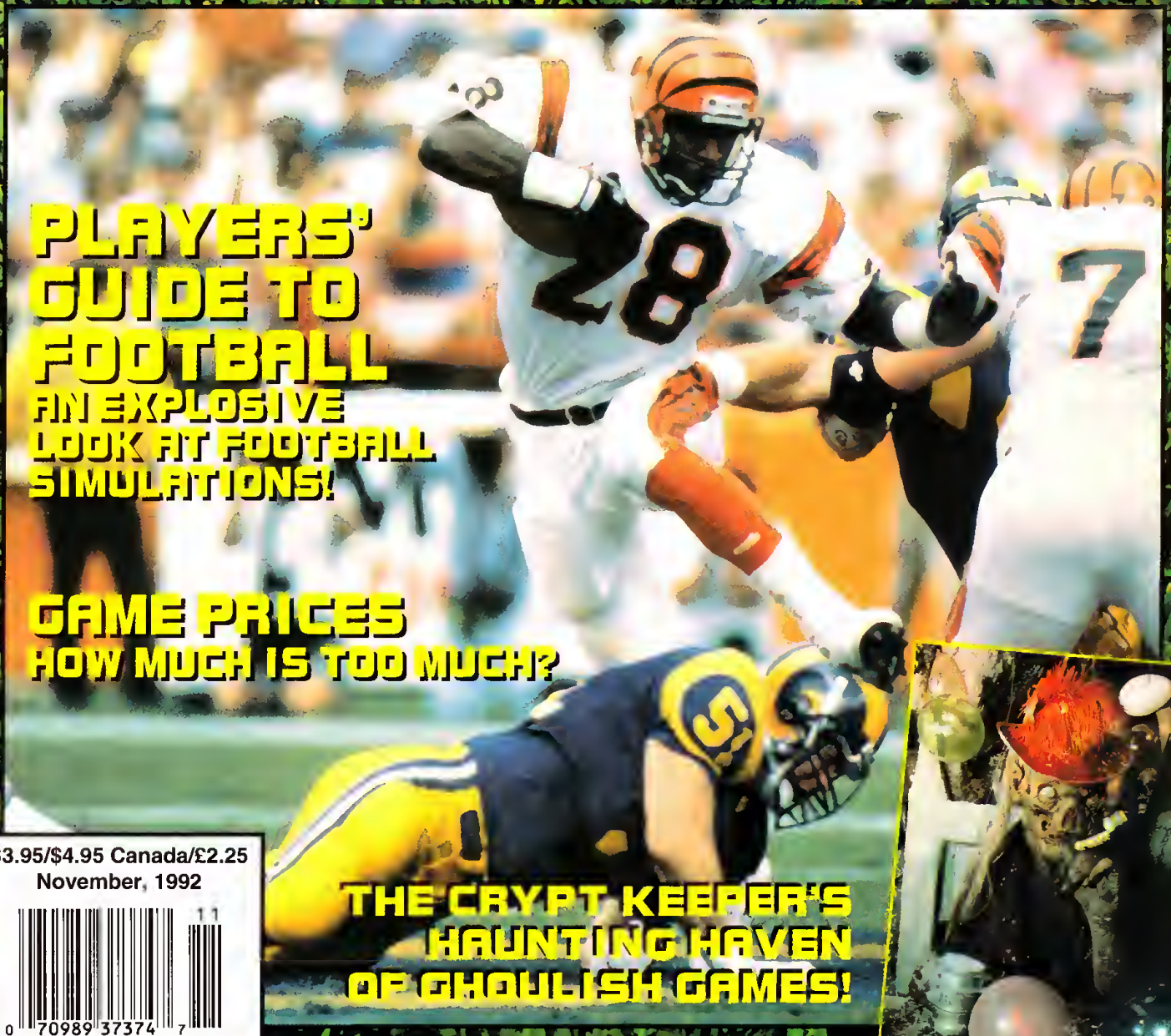
CD GAMING – IS IT THE FUTURE OR A FARCE?

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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

ELECTRONIC GAMES

VIDEO GAMES • COMPUTER GAMES • MULTI-MEDIA GAMES • PORTABLE GAMES • ARCADES



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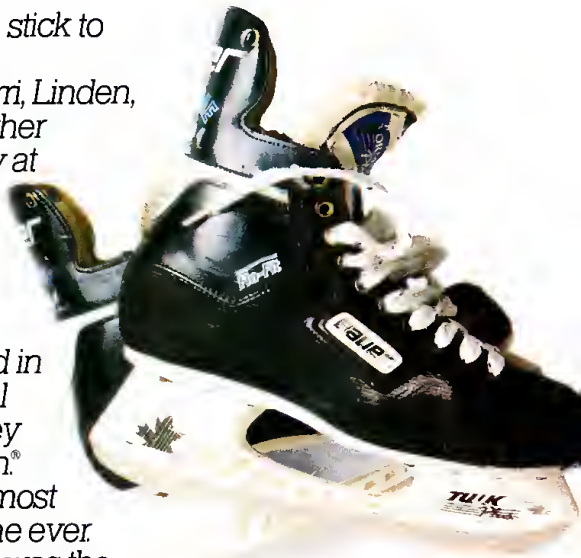
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Nobody can hold a stick to these guys:

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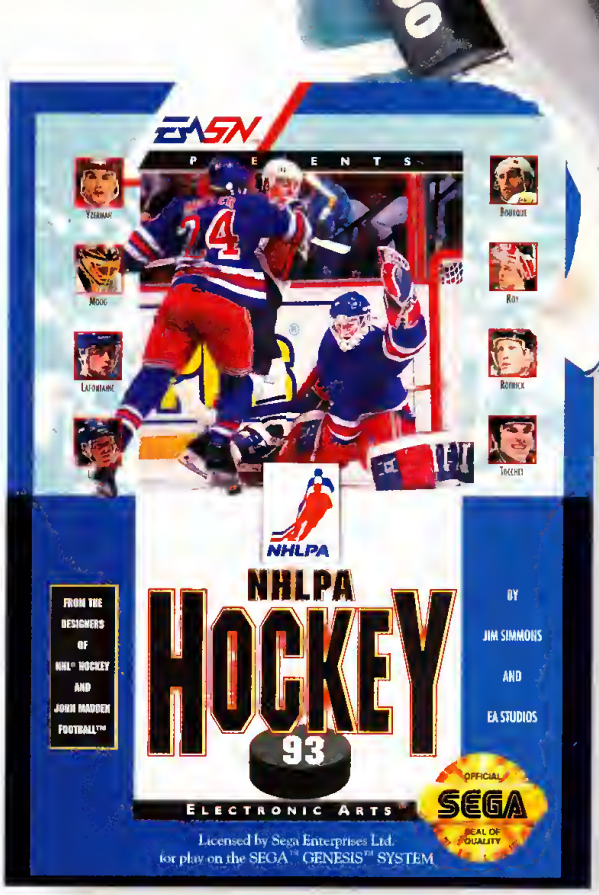
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Last year, NHL® Hockey was the top-selling Genesis™ sports title. This year, the same game designers deliver even more explosive game play. Check out all the players. The complete, accurate team rosters from the 1992 season. Plus 1993's new Ottawa and Tampa Bay expansion rosters.

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Faster, tougher to beat goalies who leave the crease to clear loose pucks, or lunge and dive to smoother shots. Individualized moves, like glass-breaking slap shots, nimble stick action, and brutal body checks. Each player skating his own unique game.

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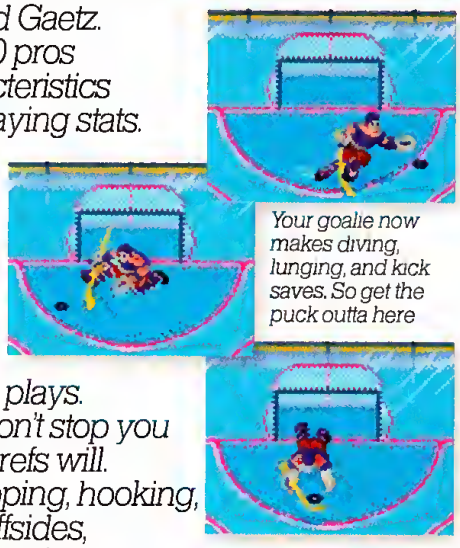


Standing between you and the trophy are scorers like Larmer. Goalies like Belfour. Intimidators like Probert and Gaetz.

Each of the 550 pros rated on 14 characteristics based on 1992 playing stats.

Some of the pros are better defensemen, others scoring machines, others are specialists at killing off opponents' power plays.

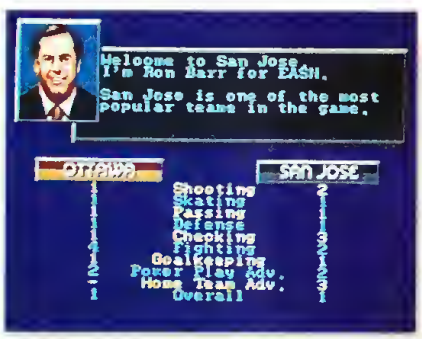
If these guys don't stop you in your tracks, the refs will. Calling you for tripping, hooking, cross-checking, offsides, interference, or icing. The more severe the penalty, the longer you're in the sin bin. There are even injuries that can knock you out for the game.



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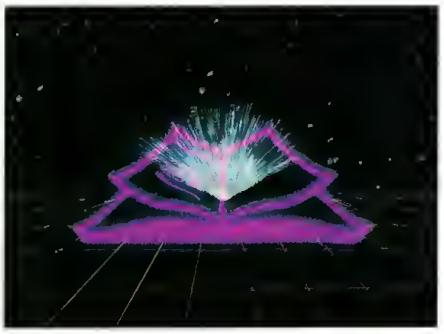


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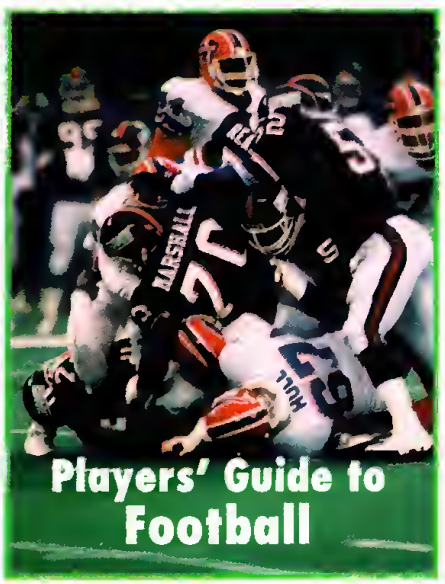
PRO SET



INSIDE EG

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EG presents a blow-out of the finest gridiron contests of the year.

COVER STORY

- **Players' Guide to Football 25**
  Football season is here, and with it the 1992-93 season of football games. EG takes an in-depth view of what's a touch down and where the fumbles are. Included are interviews, new games, and instructions on forming your own stat-league.

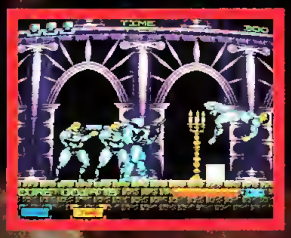
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- **Light Out! 36**
  Join the Crypt Keeper, host of HBO's Tales from the Crypt, as he looks at scary games. Okay, Kiddies. This may be one you'll want to send your parents out of the room for, but if read properly, you just may get a-head.
- **Price of Technology 42**
  Do you hate to spend fifty-bucks on a video game? How about $60 or $70? Want to know why games cost what they do? Just turn here.
- **Apogee: Shareware 44**
  Shareware used to by synonymous with cheap, poorly crafted software. Today, that opinion is changing. Here is a look at one of the companies responsible for that change, and the products they represent.
- **EG Interview 48**
  Desert Strike - Return to the Gulf, is striking the Super Nintendo and Genesis. EG interviews the creators of this intense action/shooter.
- **CD Multimedia 52**
  Consider, CD systems for computers and video game systems. Are they here to stay, or just passing by?
- **Gaming On Line 94**
  In the first of his series, Ed Dille looks at America On Line and the new state-of-the-art games being offered to subscribers.

About the art — We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:
Football photos courtesy of the NFL and individual artists listed.

And a special thanks to our freelance artists:
Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography
Bob Forrest — Price of Technology and CD Multimedia (© 1992 Bob Forrest)
Cliff Spohn — EG Interview
And Extra Special thanks to the folks at HBO for allowing the Crypt Keeper to visit the EG offices. As you can see by the pictures, we had a great time.
Um...by the way...We really don't mind the paper-clips, pens, and computer keyboard Mr. Keeper accidentally took back in his briefcase, but if you would, ask him to return Juli, our Art Director. She is needed at work and her plants are dying.

ROBOCOP 3™







OCP is sending in Rehab Officers to clear the streets of Old Detroit, making way for the construction of Delta City. When ROBOCOP sees helpless families forced out of their homes as the bulldozers move in, he joins the resistance movement to battle the Rehabs!

Armed with a new multi-weapon arm attachment containing a large-bore cannon and a smart bomb, plus a gyropack for airborne assault capability, ROBOCOP faces a batallion of ED-209's, tanks, heavy artillery and a new adversary, DTDMD. The odds seem impossible, but remember—you're ROBOCOP!

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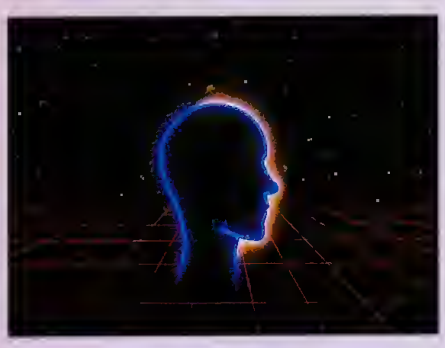
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POWER ON!

Have Easter Eggs Gone Bad?

I'll never forget the excitement that gripped the office on the day, a decade ago, that we got a letter from a reader who had found something unexpected in Atari's Adventure cartridge for the 2600. By moving around the rooms of one of the castles in a specific way, he'd made a little dot appear. Properly manipulating the dot produced the programmer's initials. Someone, perhaps Bill Kunkel, commented about the discovery of a hidden "easter egg" in the cartridge, and a tradition was born.

My favorite Easter Egg was in Coleco's Smurf Adventure. When the hero reaches the Smurf Princess he had to make a quick series of jumps to land beside her on top of a giant skull. But if the hero starts toward the captive and then turns back, she strips naked as an extra incentive!

Early Easter Eggs expressed the programmer's individuality. Back in the days when designers and developers seldom got public credit, these secret bits put a personal stamp on the game. They were harmless, if subversive, acts; secret messages to the world from the techies crowded into the back room. I never heard of anyone getting fired for putting an Easter Egg into a game program, but it was something that might cause problems for an employee, if discovered.

That's why we loved them. Easter Eggs seldom exerted much effect on game-play, but they proved there were actually human beings behind all the bytes and bits.

Inserting those unauthorized items took skill as well as guts. Easter Eggs had to be accessible enough to insure that some players found them, yet well-hidden enough to escape the project manager's censorious eye.

Now Easter Eggs have degenerated into little more than a marketing tool. It's a corporate strategy, not a personal statement. Hidden items are created right along with the rest of the program, and most companies reveal them soon after publication to guarantee some extra sales.

Think about that. The company puts an Easter Egg into the game—and then tells you how to find it! Of course, they pretty much have to tell how to find the hidden goodies, or only the most compulsive gamers would ever crack most of them. I confess that, in 20 years of electronic gaming, I have yet to hit a button 27 times, push left on the control pad 54 times, and then click "reset" 18 times while standing on one foot. Too often, that's what it takes to find an Easter Egg in the 90s.

This is a call for intelligence, not abolition. U.S. video and computer game developers have made a tremendous comeback in the last couple of years, reasserting our country's claim to world leadership in game design. Why not reclaim the idea of the Easter Egg? Those little surprises, if implemented properly, add extra enjoyment to a game. Let the Easter Eggs of tomorrow's games be as humorous—and glorious—as the ones that set the style.

— Arnie Katz

ELECTRONIC GAMES

NOVEMBER, 1992

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

A DECKER PUBLICATIONS, INC. PERIODICAL

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WARNER PUBLISHING SERVICES, INC.

Electronic Games (ISSN #1063-8326) is published monthly by Decker Publications, Inc. 1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148. Subscription rates for U.S. $23.95, Canada and Mexico $33.95, and all others by air mail only $80.00. Single issue rates: $3.95. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Electronic Games, P.O. Box 7311, Red Oak, IA 51591-2311. For subscription changes, change of address, or correspondence concerning subscriptions call 800-444-3334. The editors and the publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the expressed written permission of Decker Publications, Inc. Copyright © 1992, Decker Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. All materials listed in this magazine are subject to manufacturers change and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes. Printed in the USA.

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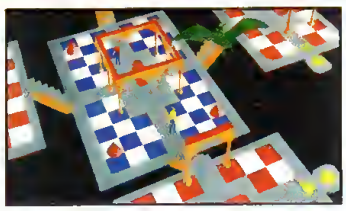
Compiled by: Joyce Worley

Virtuality Opens St. Louis Arcade

St. Louis, MO, got the prize — the country's first Virtuality center. It's located in the city's most beautiful and unique building, the historic St. Louis Union Station.

The center contains four stand-up models and four sit-down models of Virtuality, networked together for group competitions. There are two games currently in play in the St. Louis virtual reality playland,





Dactyl Nightmare, a space chase across a surrealistic platform, and **ExoRex**, which puts the player inside a robot, to duke it out with similarly equipped opponents. New games will be premiered periodically.

Virtuality provides each player with a helmet with liquid crystal viewing screen and speakers, putting the player into the game, as computers track all body movements through a 3-D, 360-degree landscape.



EA Signs CD Six-Pack

In a move that marked the industry's growing interest in CD-ROM, Electronic Arts expanded its affiliated labels program with the addition of six CD-ROM publishers. According to Nancy Smith, speaking for EA, the move is designed to meet the increasing consumer demand for CD products.

The companies joining the Electronic Arts Distribution program are Ebook, Humongous Entertainment, ICOM Simulations, NovaLogic, Pop Rocket, and Zelos!.

Some of the products scheduled for distribution this winter are: Ebook's **Aesop's Fables** and Twelve Roads to **Gettysburg**; Humongous' **Putt-Putt Joins The Parade**; ICOM's **Sherlock Holmes II** and **Earth Invitational**; NovaLogic's battle simulations (not yet named); Pop Rocket's rock'n roll adventure **Total Distortion**; and Zelos!' line of informational titles.

EA Supports Sega CD

The Sega CD hasn't even been released in America, but it's already gaining some important support among software developers. Electronic Arts has been licensed by Sega Enterprises to produce software for the new peripheral.

The Sega CD, which works with the Genesis to provide multimedia entertainment, is expected to be available in retail outlets in November of this year.

In an EG exclusive interview, company spokesman Stewart Bonn revealed they were founding a new CD group, to "jump start the company in CD, and to start new developments". He went on to say that they expect to address a wide market, including some new areas for the company. They are looking into early learning, edutainment, and infotainment.

Konami Comes to Genesis

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—the Hyperstone Heist is the newest game from Konami, Inc., and it's for the Genesis system. Konami signed with Sega of America to produce original games for the Genesis, and other scheduled titles include **Sunset Riders**, based on Konami's coin-op game, and, by spring, **Tiny Toon Adventures.**

Konami continues development of games for Nintendo's systems, with 16 games scheduled including **Teenage Mutant Turtles IV—Turtles in Time**, for the Super NES.

Super Controllers Fill Special Needs

Manufacturers are vying to create control devices with special features that make gaming easier, higher scoring, or just more comfortable for the player.this year. Shoppers will find a wide variety of joystick and mouse controllers to customize play to individual taste.

Logitech introduced the Kidz Mouse for the Macintosh. Ergonomically



Logitech's Kidz Mouse

designed for small hands, it's nonetheless as precise as a a grown-up mouse. It retails for $79, from most dealers. An IBM Kidz Mouse is also available.

IMN Control introduced a special device for gamers who already own the Gamehandler for use on 8-bit Nintendo. The player plugs the 16-bit Super Adapter into the

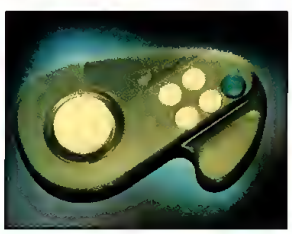


Gamehandler NSX by IMN Control

base of the original Gamehandler, for SNES compatibility. The adapter retails for under $20, and provides the same special features that are available with the new Gamehandler-NSX.

The Gamehandler-NSX for the Super NES has reversible buttons for customized, one-handed operation, and the ability to change games by toggling slow motion, to run a game backward, or hyperwarp around the screen. This deluxe controller retails for under $55, and features many built-in game tricks and tips, plus promise of more updates to come via a special newsletter from IMN Control.

Suncom's PC Command Control is a control pad for IBM and compatibles, designed specifically for Nintendo players who use computers. It features five fire buttons and a control disc, and is said to be ideal for arcade and flight simulation software. It retails for $29.99, and it does require a game card; Suncom recommends



PC Command Control

their own GamePort 2+ or equivalent.

Suncom's FX 2000 is a joystick for IBM ($39.99); this one lets users orient the stick for either left or right-handed players. It has a pistol grip, with fire buttons on top and at the trigger finger, auto fire, switchable buttons, throttle control, and suction cups for tabletop use. It's reported to reduce arm and wrist fatigue to allow longer play.

Computers Mated At Chess-a-thon

A thousand children played chess with 30 of the world's chess masters in Central Park in the first annual charity Chess-a-thon this summer. This event climaxed the two-week U.S. Chess Festival in New York City, sponsored by Fidelity Electronics, Miami, FL, and its German sister computerized chess board maker, Mephisto, along with The Software Toolworks (**Chessmaster** software) and a number of other companies and organizations. The participating master s were each challenged by 40 young players. Judit Polgar, the 15-year-old Hungarian grand master, played against Harlem's Raging Rooks, the former U.S. Junior High School Champion chess team. One of her opponents, 15-year-old Sharu Robinson, actually succeeded in achieving a draw.

The theme of the Chess-a-thon event was Push Pawns, Not Drugs. According to Dr. John Renaldo, Fidelity's national marketing director, "Chess is a strong deterrent to substance abuse among teenagers. Chess can help keep kids off the streets and out of gangs, as well as improve their performance in schools."



Grand master Judit Polgar plays Raging Rooks team members

Kickoff event for the festival was the third annual Harvard Cup man-versus-machine chess competition, in which five grand masters were pitted against machines from Fidelity, Mephisto and Heuristics, and The Software Toolworks' **Chessmaster 3000**. No computerized system was uniformly successful against the grand masters. Michael Rohde (ranked 14th in the U.S., with a 2623 rating) emerged in first place, and Sergei Kudrin (rated at 2669 and ranked 6th), came in second.

Sammy Still In Business

Despite earlier reports, American Sammy will not cease video game operations in the US. The Japanese-owned company, whose parent is a leading maker of home video and coin-op games, plans to publish all announced titles, definitely including the eagerly awaited **Might & Magic**.

Radio Shack Gets Software Kiosks



After a year-long pilot project, Radio Shack has expanded the availability of the TandyVision kiosks. The kiosk project, tested in almost 200 stores during the past year, yielded such good results that the company will place the electronic ordering system in all stores. The system indexes software, with photo and description of each product, so viewers select, compare, and even print data sheets. The multimedia system inside, accessed by a touch-sensitive screen, is capable of reproducing photographs, game screens, animations, or even non-interactive demos of the product. Customers pay for their selection in store, and it's shipped to them from Ingram Micro, under terms of a software fulfillment agreement recently signed with Tandy.

Sweatin' To The Video Games

The next time your parents say you've been gaming too long, just tell 'em the doctor said it was okay. A recent test conducted by independent researchers suggests that video gaming may actually be as healthy as a brisk walk. They tested a group of players, ages 16 to 25, after a 30 minute play session, and found that gaming caused an 80% increase in energy expenditure, and a 25% increase in heart rate, which is equivalent to a 2 m.p.h. hike.

Stronger Penalties Urged for Piracy.

Nintendo of America, and more than 50 video game developers and publishers, appeared before a House subcommittee, urging the adoption of legislation that would strengthen criminal penalties for computer software piracy.

James I. Charne, vice president of Absolute Entertainment, Inc. spoke before the committee, relating the feelings of a disgruntled industry. "We estimate annual losses of more than $1 billion from the displacement of sales of legitimate video games," said Charne, "If counterfeiting like this continues unchecked, we believe a substantial number of U.S. companies like mine and thousands of U.S. jobs will be put into jeopardy."

Decision on this piece of legislation should be made soon.

CD Pact Unites Hong Kong, Russia

InterOptica Publishing Limited, Hong Kong, multimedia CD-ROM publisher, and the Institute of Informatics Problems (IPIAN) of the Russian Academy of Sciences agreed to co-develop multimedia software. InterOptica, founded in 1990 by traveler journalist Simon Winchester and his wife Catherine, produces such titles as Great Cities of the World and Great Wonders of the World for both PC and Macintosh formats. IPIAN was founded in 1983 by computer scientist Boris Naumov, then responsible for the USSR's minicomputer products.

"The initial titles will concentrate on Russian themes," said Catherine Winchester, InterOptica's managing director. "In later stages we intend to co-develop packages in other areas where the Russians have well-known expertise, such as computer-aided instruction and science."



Sierra Network Design Award

The Interactive Design Association awarded The Sierra Network (TSN) its Design Award, citing its personal approach, graphical interface and entertainment value. Particularly noted was TSN's graphic **FaceMaker**, by which members make visual representations of themselves with which to interact with other members.

A wholly owned subsidiary of Sierra On-Line, Inc., TSN emphasizes multi-level on-line interaction, so that members can talk to each other even while playing or watching others play games such as bridge, chess or backgammon.

Tecmo Moves To Larger Quarters

Video game manufacturer Tecmo, Inc., moved its operations to Torrance, California, because of the need for more space.

Announcing the move, President Ken Nakata said, "The larger warehouse space and more office space will enable Tecmo to better serve our customers and in addition this move reflects Tecmo's long term commitment to the video game industry."

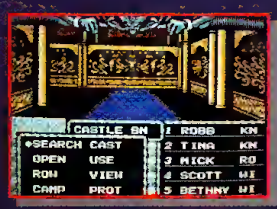
Tecmo's games for the Nintendo Entertainment System include **Super Bowl** and an NBA Basketball series.

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Lead your party of hand-picked adventurers into this enchanted world! From the beast-ridden caverns of the underworld, to the majestic castles of the land, you'll travel in search of clues to unlock the Secret of the Inner Sanctum!



Beware, brave warriors, for the labyrinths of Varn are heavy with the smell of Doom.



Train your Sorcerers and Clerics in over 96 spells of destruction and defense!



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Prodigy Hosts *Mystery Party*

The Prodigy *Mystery Party* has been added to the Prodigy service, a follow-up to its popular mystery series, *Abel Adventures*. Members join teams as one of eight characters, each of whom has a secret goal to achieve. Each character's actions are based on decisions that the team makes as a group. Each day the story so far is made available to the players, both public information and the decisions of the player's team. Stories will last a month, during which a mystery has to be solved as well as players trying trying to aid their characters to succeed in their private agendas. New stories will be offered several times a year.

The Prodigy *Mystery Party* is just one of the many new On-Line adventures, popping up on most major bulletin board services, all over the country.

The Custom Choice is priced at $14.95 over Prodigy's monthly fee.

TSN Introduces Flat Rate

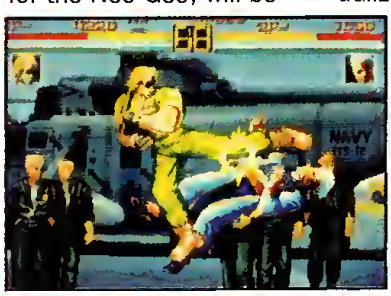
Sierra On-Line announced a nationwide flat rate of $12.95 per month for The Sierra Network, for 30 weekend and night hours per month on line.

Telecommunicators can sign onto the network, play games with the other members, chat, and use all other services, which include conferences, tournaments, electronic mail, and bulletin boards on a variety of subjects.

Additional rates apply for weekday hours and certain services.

SNK Breaks 100 MEG Barrier

SNK has completed the biggest cartridge done to date, at least in terms of memory, and shattered the 100 meg barrier like a foot exploding through a piece of plywood. **Art of Fighting**, for the Neo Geo, will be available for home play before Christmas.



The giant game needed 108 megs of memory for non-stop speech, and for the 10 characters, (said to be the biggest ever seen on a home video game), ranging from mafioso to martial artists, each with individualized strengths, weaknesses and 'magic attack techniques'. Players fight head-to-head, against another human, or even same character *vs* same character.

Myriad Debuts NES Game Packs

Myriad Games, Inc., Kingwood, TX, has a series of multi-game cartridges for the NES that are sold and rented exclusively through video stores.

Each cartridge, retailing for $69.50, contains six original games, with such titles as **Cosmo Cop**, **Magic Carpet 1001**, and **Balloon Monster**.

Myriad backs up its product with sales displays and promotional brochures that double as instruction manuals for the games.

Malibu, Acme Merge

Veteran gamesman Bob Jacob (best known for his now-defunct company, Cinemaware) has merged his development group, Acme Interactive, with Malibu Comics. The new firm, Malibu Interactive, will focus on co-publishing agreements.

Jacob saw a synergy between video games and comics, which sparked the merger. Jacob plans to turn comics into interactive entertainments. Currently, they have the game rights for Men In Black (which will also be a feature film from Columbia Pictures), and also plan projects to combine Malibu characters with well known rock bands in games. "We want to bring together disparate elements," explained Jacob.

Maxis Gets Down to Business

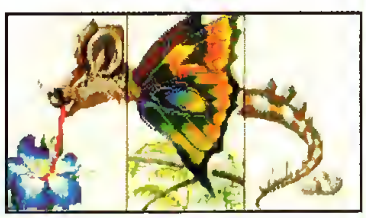
Recognizing the potentials of its simulations engine, Maxis, Orinda, CA, publisher of **SimCity**, **SimEarth** and others in the Software Toys line, created two business units for education and business training.

"Our simulation software not only provides a more effective approach to learning, it's a lot more fun than traditional techniques," said Jeff Braun, president and co-founder. "It's accepted among educators that people learn better and faster when they are challenged, are allowed to grow at their own pace and enjoy the process as well."

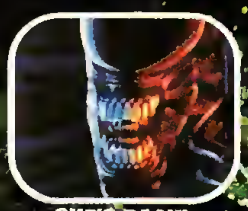
He noted that the establishment of three separate business units would assure that appropriate attention be given to each area.

A recent investment by E. M. Warburg, Picus & Co., New York, provided capital for the expansion.

Educational versions of some programs, such as **SimLife**, have been produced all along, but the newest following the establishment of the new units is **SimFarm**.



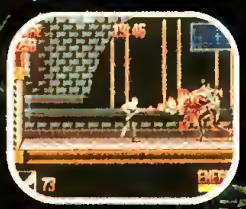
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Crystal Ball

Some exciting electronic games are coming our way in time for the holiday season. Here's a brief rundown on a few of special interest.

The Incredible Machine (Sierra On-Line/PC) is the first game from Jeff Tunnell since he formed his new development group under the Sierra-Dynamix umbrella. The gamer plays Rube Goldberg and builds jury-rigged contraptions to maneuver an object across the playfield to the exit. There will be 21 puzzles to challenge the strategist. If you like **Lemmings**, this is one worth a look when it gets to stores in a month so so.

The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes, (Electronic Arts/PC) may be the best computer game ever to feature the World's Greatest Consulting Detective. The case, set in 1888 London, involves the brutal murder of an actress. The point-and-click interface promises smooth game-play, and the graphics and sound perfectly evoke the gaslit, fog-shrouded atmosphere of Victorian London. The game is definitely afoot in this stylish Holmes adventure!

Koei Romances Sega's Genesis

Koei Corporation's hit Nintendo title, **Romance of the Three Kingdoms II**, has just been released for the Genesis. This marks the companies first entry as an official sega licensee. Several other games are set to follow, including the strategy adventure game, **Gemfire**.

Romance casts the gamer as a general of China, and **Gemfire** is an Arthurian-styled roleplayer. Both are said to offer superior game play, more detailed graphics, and improved game speed over their Nintendo counterparts.

Koei's strategy games are most popular in Japan and appear on every system.

Koei also plans two new releases for IBM this autumn, **Gemfire** and **Liberty Or Death** (the gamer takes the role of General Washington or Lord Cornwallis in the war for American independence.)

Top Coin-Ops of June 1992

Figures courtesy of *Replay Magazine*, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Streetfighter II:CE*/Capcom
2. *Terminator 2*/Midway
3. *Double Axle*/Taito
4. *Sunset Riders*/Konami
5. *Space Gun*/Taito
6. *Turbo Out Run*/Sega
7. *Captain America*/DataEast
8. *Steel Gunner*/Namco
9. *S.C.I.*/Taito
10. *Spiderman*/Sega

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *X-Men*/Konami
2. *Steel Talons*/Atari
3. *Grand Prix Star*/Jaleco
4. *Race Drivin'*/Atari
5. *Final Lap 2*/Namco
6. *Mad Dog*/Betson/ALG
7. *Road Riot*/Atari
8. *Hard Drivin'*/Atari
9. *Final Lap*/Atari
10. *Galaxy Force*/Sega

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II*/Capcom
2. *Aero Fighters*/McO'River
3. *Varth*/Romstar
4. *Ninja Commando*/SNK
5. *Fatal Fury*/SNK
6. *Total Carnage*/Midway
7. *King of Monsters*/SNK
8. *Baseball Stars 2*/SNK
9. *Wrestlefest*/Technos
10. *Steel Gunner*/Namco

Top Selling PC Games, June 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, DC., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbages and Waldensoftware.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Aces of the Pacific*/Sierra
2. *Hardball III*/Accolade
3. *A Train*/Maxis
4. *Indiana Jones:Fate of Atlantis*/LucasArts
5. *Dark Queen of Krynn*/Electronic Arts
6. *Civilization*/MicroProse
7. *Gateway* /Accolade
8. *Sim City* /Maxis
9. *F117A Stealth Fighter 2.0*/MicroProse
10. *Ultima VII*/Origin

Top MS-DOS Education Games

1. *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego*/Broderbund
2. *Mavis Beacon TeachesTyping*/Software Toolworks
3. *Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego*/Broderbund
4. *New Math Blaster Plus*/Davidson
5. *Playroom*/Broderbund
6. *Algeblaster Plus*/Davidson
7. *Reader Rabbit 1*/Learning Company
8. *Reader Rabbit 2*/Learning Company
9. *Body Works*/Automap
10. *Oregon Trail*/MECC

Nintendo CD-ROM To Go 32-Bit

Nintendo's president Hiroshi Yamauchi disclosed a few more details about the Nintendo CD-ROM machine at a press conference in Tokyo. He said that Nintendo is continuing work on its CD-ROM accessory, but the unit will incorporate a new 32-bit processor. According to Yamauchi, CD-ROM based on a 16-bit processor would not provide enough advance over the capabilities of the Super FX chip for the Super NES. By going to the 32-bit processor, the new machine will offer game developers twice the processing power and speed for an enhanced gaming experience.

The 32-bit CD-ROM machine, an accessory to the Super NES, should be in mass production by August of 1993. However, the introduction of the unit is dependent upon development of games for the new equipment "which offer a significant difference from cartridge-based games".

Nintendo expects to discuss the launch of the new equipment at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show, June 1993.

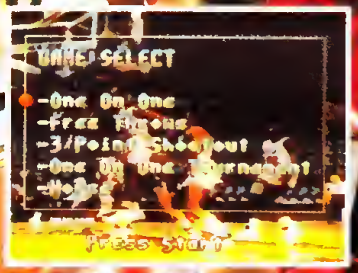
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Nintendo Unveils Super FX Chip

Nintendo games are set to get a whole lot better, thanks to some high-level new technology just developed. Nintendo launched a super effects custom chip at a software show in Tokyo, and predicted that it would allow a new generation of 3-D gameplay, at a level of realism previously unobtainable.

The Nintendo Super FX chip, scheduled for release in February 1993, is based on RISC technology, and includes digital signal processor functions to perform texture mapping, shading, and real time 3-D perspective for the 16-bit Super Nintendo Entertainment System.

The first Super NES game that uses the chip should be ready by the time of the chip's introduction, and Nintendo licenses will be able to start using the chip early next year.

Recycle Old Systems

If you've been wondering what to do with your old CPUs, here's an answer—and a tax deduction, too!

The National Cristina Foundation wants your old computer equipment, to be channeled as donations to groups that assist students and disabled workers. They work with grassroots partners to direct donations to route the equipment to training and educational organizations.

To donate equipment, call the Foundation at 800-274-7846. Old computers never die! They'll just keep on computing, if you'll send them to someone who'll love 'em as much as you did when they were new.

A Look to the East

by Marc Camron

Japan heated up at the end of August, with two major trade shows.

Nintendo hosted their annual bash, showing the latest and greatest for the Famicom and Super Famicom. One of the big surprises was the postponement of the CD-ROM unit (elsewhere in news section). What was present, was a new 3-D graphics chip, that will make Mode 7 look like 8-Bit. The chip will be released next year, and could significantly raise the cost of games. More on this as it develops.

One other fine tidbit was the announcement of a 4-player adapter for the Super NES. No word on when this will be brought to the states, but rumors say to look for it at the January CES.

Also in Japan, just a couple of days after the Nintendo show, was the Jamma, arcade show. It was here that the real innovations in electronic gaming could be seen.

Sega was showing a very impressive driving game called **Virtual Racing**. While not a true virtual reality game (no helmet is worn, so the player is not encompassed in the game world), the game brings the player one step closer to getting behind the wheel of a race car. Polygon filled graphics using Sega's 32-Bit engine highlight this state-of-the-art driving masterpiece.

Another game that blew away the crowds was **Galaxian 3**. No more little aliens tromping down the screen. This **Galaxian** is 3-D shooting action for up to 6-players. The game swoops around space, while the player fires upon other spaceships, asteroids, and anything else in the way. While the player only controls the gun and not the ship, this technology looks promising.



Cobra Strikes Sega CD

Sega liked it so much, they wanted it for their own. Renovation's first CD title, **Cobra Command**, designed for the Sega CD, hit the spot so much at Sega, that the company decided to buy it for their own library. The game will be published under the Sega label this winter.

Cobra Command was produced and developed by Telenet Japan's Wolfteam design group. It features a unique graphic set that resembles Japanese cartoons, with a fast frame rate. It's a realistic helicopter simulation in which the gamer must dislodge terrorists from hiding places in New York City, the Grand Canyon, and other famous spots around the world.



SSI & TSR In 7-Year Pact

Strategic Simulations, Inc. and TSR, Inc. have completed their negotiations, and agreed on the details of their new agreement. Under terms of the new contract, SSI's license was renewed, to create games on TSR's Advanced Dungeons 7 Dragons properties.

The 1992 contract grants SSI game rights for all electronic systems, including all PC formats, video game formats, and CD, for a five year period, followed by a two-year option, for a total of seven years.

The field reports are in: Super Battletank™ scores a decisive victory!





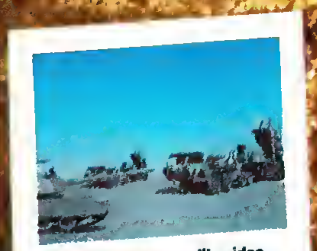
Command the state-of-the-art weaponry and guidance systems of the fearsome M1A1!



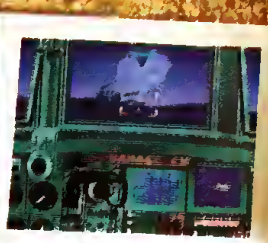
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Digitized VCR-quality video sequences!



Day and night combat scenarios!



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And coming soon: ***Super Battletank*** *on the Sega™ Genesis™!*

Designed by Garry Kitchen and Alex DeMeo.

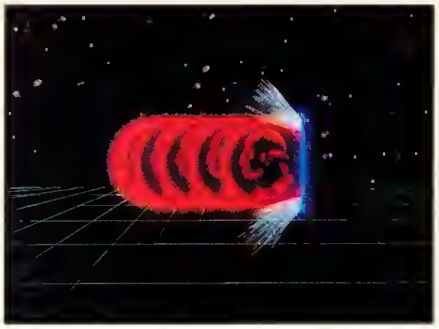
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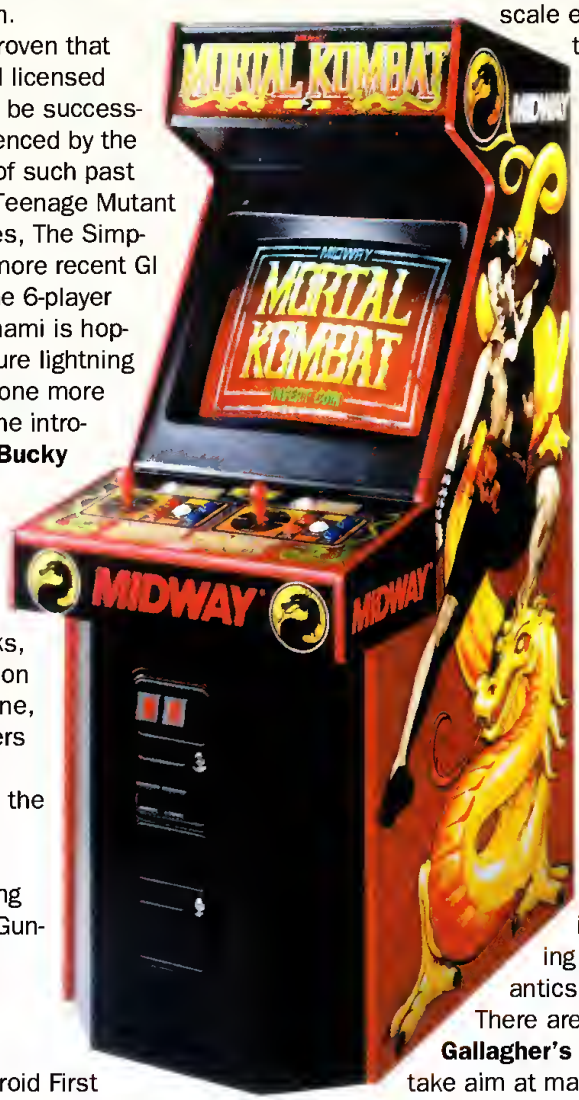
Inside the World of Coin-Op

Last time around, in our inaugural issue, we tried to give a very broad overview of what has taken place in the ever-evolving world of coin-operated amusement games. Hopefully, by expounding on where game design has been, the trends and influences behind the scenes, we can better understand where the industry is today and what we might expect in the future.

The introduction of new games in the fall has always been critical, and this year is no exception as all the major manufacturers gear up to regale us with their latest creations. Headlining current releases is an attraction that might have you believing you're actually part of an off-road motocross race. With Atari's **Moto Frenzy**, a ride-on, full-motion motorcycle simulator, get ready to lean, pivot, and pop wheelies depending upon your control and the action on screen. Detail is there right down to handlebar controls with a twist-grip throttle and the addition of a fire button to destroy some of the obstacles in your way.

And you'll be on your way with six different player-selectable courses that will take you through Los Angeles, Maui, Las Vegas, Utah, Kenya or Norway. An eclectic mix to be sure, Moto Frenzy features a standard timed lap format. There's extended play based on completing a given course within the pre-set time, as well as bonuses awarded for special stunts whether traversing icy tracks (complete with oncoming polar bears), or the menacing presence of monster trucks. A final word about Moto Frenzy—although this is just a single-player game, you might find your local amusement center 'linking up' two games together for some adrenaline-pumping head-to-head competition.

Having proven that well-crafted licensed games can be successful as evidenced by the popularity of such past efforts as Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Simpsons, the more recent GI Joe, and the 6-player X-Men, Konami is hoping to capture lightning in a bottle one more time with the introduction of **Bucky O'Hare**. Based on an animated cartoon show, comic books, and an action figure toy line, video gamers will now be able to join the good Captain O'Hare along with Chief Gunners Mate Dead Eye Duck, Pilot Jenny and Blinky, Android First Class, in a four-player horizontal-scrolling adventure. Using an 8-way joystick and a trio of action buttons to control shooting, jumping, and super weaponry, your objective is to fight the evil Toad Military Forces and, of course, save the universe from destruction.



Highly detailed on-screen graphics and non-stop combat against a dizzying array of adversaries and large-scale enemies make this a very familiar video game theme that is suitably embellished by the colorful characters you control and encounter from one wave to the next.

For an experience that is much more lifelike, laser video games have enjoyed a revitalization with last year's introduction of Mad Dog McCree, which brought a wild west shootout to the arcades. Well, now American Laser Games is back with a one- or two-player shooting gallery featuring the comedic antics of Gallagher. There are four worlds to **Gallagher's Gallery.** As you take aim at many of the foods Gallagher hates to eat, travel to Gadget Land to shoot at things like alarm clocks and model airplanes. Gallagher also invites you to his Sheriff's Office for some target



practice, and a Play Room where you might take a bead on balloons or gumball machines.

From one wave to the next, Gallagher is ever-present, offering up his own unique humor and some well selected taunts in the hope that you're up to challenge the infamous Death by Melon. After all, Gallagher's Gallery wouldn't be complete without a little watermelon smashing. So get ready...aim...fire!

Realism in game design continues to move ahead with what is being heralded as the coin-op video blockbuster for 1992. On the heels of their award-winning **Terminator 2** dual-player gun game, Midway has just released **Mortal Kombat**. A digitized graphics, two-player spectacular, this fighting game features an eight-way microswitch joystick and five-button controls for kicks, punches, blocks, and combination moves that will test any gamer's tenacity, reflexes, and resolve.

It's a fight to the finish as you select one of the eight martial artists for a head-to-head, best two-out-of-three match. Each of the on-screen warriors, from the big-screen superstar Johnny Cage to Liu Kang, member of the secret White Lotus Society (with Kano, Raiden, Sub-Zero and Sonya Blade), possess an arsenal of unique secret moves. Master these to make your way up the ladder for the ultimate confrontation against the likes of the four-armed mutant warrior Goro and, finally, the deceptively powerful Emperor Shang Tsung.

These are just a few of the more significant games you'll be encountering in the weeks and months ahead, but there are also some sneak previews we'd like to offer for you to look out for. Taking a page out the old novelty games that once ruled the arcades, Jaleco is serving up a high-tech arm wrestling test of strength in a machine called **Arm Champs II**.

Two more gun games of note include **Lethal Enforcers**, a two-player shoot-'em-up from Konami that will be their first effort in digitized graphics technology, and **Operation Gun Buster**, an explosive four-player gun game from Taito, featuring interactive team competition. **King of the Monsters 2** from SNK is one of the latest additions to the growing library of hits for the coin-op Neo-Geo system.



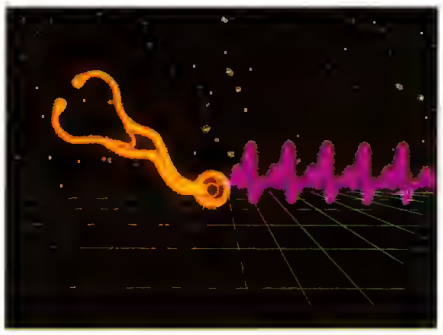
Finally, pinball players aren't going to be left out in the cold when they discover **A.G. Soccer-Ball**. From the new Alvin G. & Co., this debut puts players at either end of a machine designed to provide some heated head-to-head action based on one of the world's most popular sports. Although this is an unconventional approach to pinball competition, A.G. Soccer-Ball utilizes a revolutionary patented "Switch Flipper" mechanism that 'reads' each players' scoring. The playfield is filled with drop targets, spinners, and enough features and strategy to keep pinball players flipping for more.

And, trying to duplicate the success of the Addams Family, which has become the best selling pinball machine of all time—a truly significant achievement—Bally is taking players on a high seas adventure with the introduction of **Black Rose**. It's full speed ahead for Pirate's Cove and two or three-ball excitement. A spiraling Whirlpool ramp and explosive action via Davy Jones' Locker add to the excitement of this flipper fest. With high scoring Jackpots and millions of points to be earned, **Black Rose** features a unique fire button on the front control panel that activates a special cannon for placing broadside shots at enemy ships.

In addition, Black Rose continues a trend that has become much more prevalent in the world of pinball with the inclusion of three different video game modes. Thanks to the development of all new dot matrix display technology, you'll be able to test your skill at throwing knives, swinging from the rigging, and even walking planks for a plunge into the water and a frantic swim away from a fast-approaching, hungry, shark.

For coin-op players, it's easy to see that creative development is moving ahead rapidly, ensuring an abundant selection of challenging machines to suit the desires of every gamer around the world. And more is still to come. So until next time, score high and have some fun.

— Jay Carter



GAME DOCTOR

Questions, Questions, Questions! Answers, Answers, Answers!

by The Game Doctor

Welcome to the second issue of EG! We've got plenty of fascinating questions this month, so let's get right into things following a brief explanation of the Game Doc Prize Packet.

These packets are samples of some of the many game-related goodies the Doc collects at trade shows and from kind-hearted game companies. Key chains, caps, t-shirts, wrist watches and other neat stuff fills the Doc's gigantic Box O' Goodies. In most issues, we will select one letter as **Q** of the Month and send the writer a Game Packet. We can't promise a winner every issue—just before the big trade shows, our supplies sometimes dwindle, but we'll do our best.

This month's winner is James Geiger with a question that must be on the minds of many of our readers:

Q: First, I just want to say that I enjoy your column and wish you many more years of success. Now down to business. In the [Genesis] game **Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf**, the graphics are done by a new technology called "Ray-Drawn". I must say that [it] produces great graphics and effects. I just love the way the canopy on the helicopter shines and reflects the sunlight when it turns. Anyway, what exactly is ray-drawn [technology]?

James R. Geiger
Vinton, IA

A: *There are a number of names for the technology you're discussing, James, and it isn't even all that new. Ray-Drawing, Ray-Tracing, and Rendering are names that have been applied to the same basic approach.*

*Here's how it works: A model of an object—a helicopter, for example, in Electronic Arts' **Desert Strike**—is bombarded by light from every possible angle. The computer then plots points covering the surface and "remembers" how that section of the object's surface looked when the rays struck it from a variety of angles. It is then able to reproduce the object with light reflecting off the surface in exactly the same way as would in reality.*

Q: I think the enclosed article [a lengthy discussion, most of it based on comments by veteran programming wizard Bill Heineman, discussing his problems with relative processor speeds in his conversion of **Crystal Quest** for the Apple IIgs] helps clear up a point that seems to have had much discussion in your column. The Apple IIgs uses a 65816 chip that can emulate a 6502 (8-bit) in order to run older Apple II programs. This may have [created] the idea that a 65816 is an upgraded 6502. In the article [mentioned above] Heineman said that if a program slowed to a crawl on the Mac II with a 68000 at 16 Mhz, how could the IIgs run the program at a reasonable speed with a 65816 running at 2.8Mhz?

He went on to say that a 65818 at 1 Mhz (the same speed as an Apple IIe 6502) is the same as a 68000 running at 4 Mhz. If this is true, then a Mac-Plus at 7.1 Mhz is actually running at 1.8 Mhz; a Mac II at 16 Mhz is actually [running] at 4 Mhz. And, last but not least, a Sega Genesis with a 68000 at over 7 Mhz is actually running at almost 2 Mhz (compared to a 65816). This speed is slower than an unaccelerated Apple IIgs at 2.8 Mhz and certainly slower than a SNES at 3.58 Mhz. This would show that the Sega people will have to work harder to create programs as fast as those on the SNES.

David Swanson
Grand Rapids, MN

A: *We don't usually go into this much technical detail in this column, but I think you did a pretty good job of making your point in clear English, the essence of which is: you can't compare apples (the real ones as well as the computer variety) and oranges. I was with you all the way. And then came your last sentence, which seems to contradict everything you said before.*

For one thing, we know that processor speed is far from the only factor in creating actual on-screen game speed.

Every system has advantages and disadvantages. The 68000 is better than its competition at manipulating graphics, for example, and that's why it has all those chips oriented around simplifying the process of creating and animating graphics.

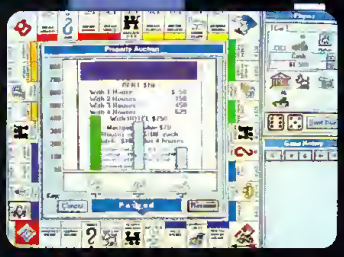
Sega has had its Genesis out much longer than the SNES and that gives them another advantage: they've learned the system's many tricks. One of the tricks they've mastered is compression, which allows long lines of code to be squashed

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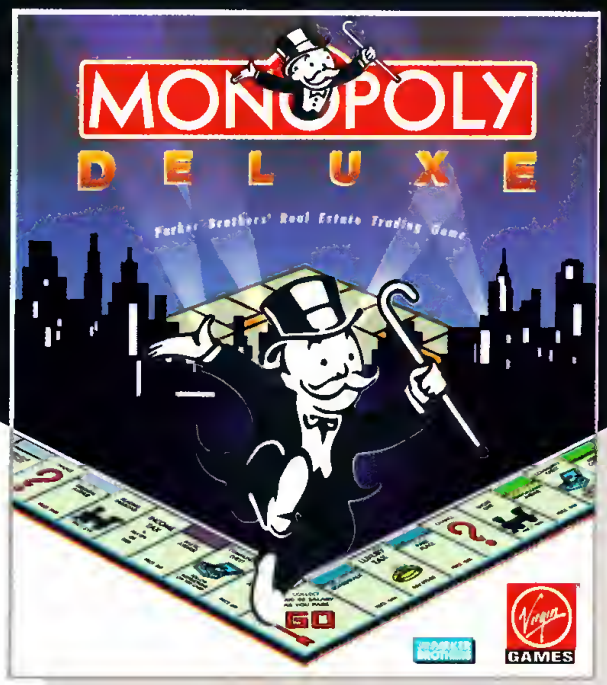
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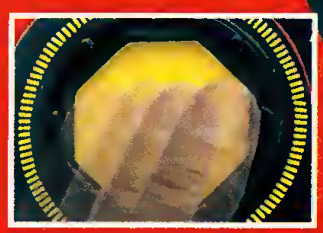
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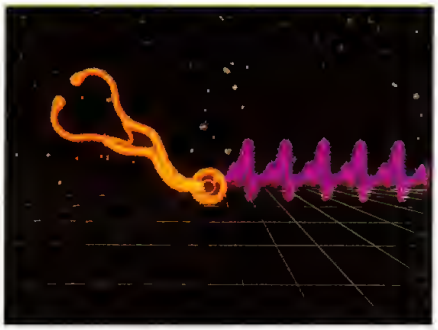


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GAME DOCTOR

down, then blown back up to full size. Sometimes this works well, especially when the developers are skilled at compression-decompression on the fly; that is, while movement is actually occurring on-screen. There are also examples of when decompression doesn't work so well. These are the moments when the entire game seems to go into vapor-lock for a few seconds, everything stops, then starts up again. Hardball III (Accolade) for the IBM, for example, while an otherwise excellent game, has incredible problems with compression lock-up in which whole scenes freeze for up to two seconds, a long time in game terms.

In any case, you bring up an excellent point: speed listed in Mhz is not an absolute; the count varies from system to system. This is yet another example of the folly of judging a system solely on a series of comparative specs.

And if you're still not satisfied, write again and I'll ring up and ask Bill H. himself, an old friend I first met in 1978 at an Atari ***Space Invaders*** *tournament. He won, of course.*

Q: In response to Steven Connell's letter regarding the Game Genie, I must say that I think he's right. Galoob's Game Genie absolutely ruins games, making them devoid of any challenge whatsoever. Let's take Tradewest's **Battletoads**, for example. It took me weeks of blood, sweat, and tears to finish. When I went to my cousin's house to show them the ending, I used the Game Genie and the game was completed in about 15 minutes with unlimited lives.

Honestly, Doc, how can you support such a peripheral? You mention that games now have to be set at unrealistically high difficulty levels and that younger players and parents would have no chance in the world of completing them. Well, what about those games you spend fifty bucks for, just to see the ending the very next day? Don't you think [players] would get more play value by having to earn the privilege of seeing the ending? By using the Game Genie, all satisfaction, challenge and playability are lost.

I sincerely hope there will not be a Game Genie for the SNES and I was quite disappointed to hear of its future arrival on the Game Boy and Genesis. Only terrible players and wimps would buy such a peripheral anyway. Serious gamers such as myself would never be caught dead with a Game Genie.

Tony Bueno
San Antonio, TX

A: *Tony, I'm gonna give it to ya straight. You are obviously a prime victim of the "conquer the game" mentality which dictates that the only reason to play a game is to reach the end and brag to your friends about it. In the old days, believe it or not, people clamored to play games like* ***Asteroids*** *and* ***Space Invaders*** *which could never be conquered; they could simply be played. And played they were! Know why? Because they were FUN.*

If a game is fun, gamers are only cheating themselves by using a peripheral to eliminate the challenge. If, however, a game is nothing but a collection of side-scrolling monsters, bosses and power-ups, well, maybe all the player wants is to look at the cool graphics. If so, they paid for their ticket, they should get to see the show.

Besides, who is to decide who gets to see the entirety of a game that's been legally paid for? How would you feel if, every time you purchased a book, someone came along after each chapter to determine whether you read it fast enough and retained sufficient content? If you passed, you could keep reading; if you failed, the rest of the pages would be torn out.

For that matter, why have difficulty levels at all? Burn those hint sheets and game maps (among the most popular features in game magazines).

By the beard of Odin, why not set every game to maximum difficulty so that only the top .05% of all players could ever hope to finish them? Where would you be then, Tony?

When you attempt to solve a crossword puzzle, you can do it all on your own, you can look up an occasional answer or you can simply copy from the completed puzzle letter by letter. Seems to me that last option would be pretty boring and unrewarding and, as a result, I doubt very much that anyone does it.

The same is true of the Game Genie. No one is forcing anyone to play with the Genie or any of these devices which alter game parameters and, if nothing else, serve as the kind of handicapping option which the systems themselves abandoned in the mid-'80s.

Do you see yourself as a member of an elite group who alone should be permitted to view the full spectacle of a game? The vast majority of gamers haven't the skill, time, patience, and/or inclination to play through a game like ***Super Mario World****. Are all those gamers therefore "wimps" as you say, or are they simply less skilled at video games than you are?*

Think about it a while and let me know what you think, okay?

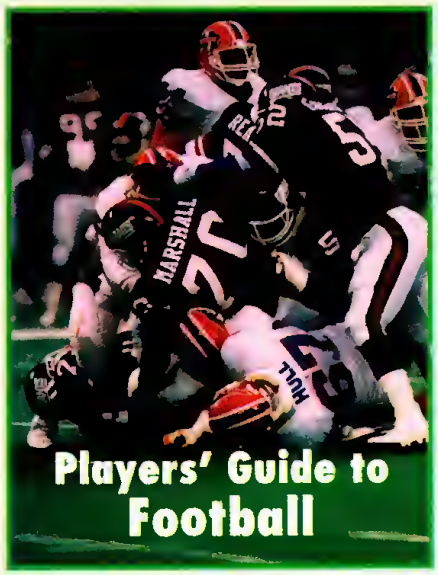
Q&A QUICKIES: Gary Ruffin Jr. of Fayetteville, NC, has dropped his Game Boy, and wants to know if he should just buy a new GB or if his current system is fixable. We spoke to an Authorized Nintendo Service group and they tell us that for $42.50 they could replace the PC Board and your system would be good as new.

That about wraps us up for this issue. Send your Qs to:

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Players' Guide to Football





Football '92: New Players' Guide to Football

By Arnie Katz and the EG Staff

Technology has finally caught up with the touchdown. Electronic football was the sports software stepchild for over a decade, but today's designers and developers have the tools they need to produce visually arresting and strategically valid football programs that avoid the overwhelming complexity of early efforts like **The World's Greatest Football Game** (Epyx, eight-bit computers) and the original **John Madden Football** (Electronic Arts/PC, Amiga).

The 1980s produced a few classics like **Super Bowl Sunday** (Avalon Hill/PC, Commodore 64), **Tecmo Bowl** (Tecmo/NES), and **Touchdown Football** (Imagic/PCjr.), but most titles didn't look, feel, or play much like the attraction that glues millions to their T.V. sets.

Lots of pigskin programs had good points, like the fantastic animation and sophisticated television-like presentation in **T.V. Sports Football** (Cinemaware/PC; NES/TurboGrafx-16), but few spiked the ball in the endzone. Until the introduction of 16-bit video game consoles and high-memory PCs, football fans waited in vain for a product that was all-pro in every facet.



TV Sports Football is the only five player football video game available.

Some of the problems that tackled efforts to produce top-quality football action on the gaming screen were:

- **Technical problems.**

Moving all those players around the field simultaneously sabotaged almost every football cartridge and disk produced before the late 1980s.

- **Poor Artificial Intelligence**

The limitation came out in two different areas of the design. On-



Bob Rosato/NFL Photos

screen athletes not under the gamer's direct control seldom looked or acted like skilled competitors, and computer coaching was overmatched against a human play-caller.

- **The Knowledge Gap**

More people know baseball well than have a comprehensive understanding of football. This is as true for designers and developers as for the general population. (Unfamiliarity with the sport is especially noticeable in video game carts produced outside the United States.)

- **The Analysis Gap**

Football analysis is still crude compared to baseball. Most pigskin predictors concentrate on picking winners, not delving into football's inner workings the way Bill James and other sabretricians do for the National Pastime. Sabremetricians have illuminated many aspects of baseball performance, which helps those who want to simulate the sport. Football game design is a less exact science.

Designers and developers have plowed through these obstacles like Roger Craig going off-tackle on 3rd and two. Three years ago, few games had what it takes to satisfy the true football expert; today there's a game to fit almost every taste.

Montana versus Madden: Round Three

Sega and Electronic Arts continue their struggle for Genesis football supremacy. Both will introduce their third Genesis cart in the last two years before the end of the year. Most critics gave **John Madden Football** (EA) the edge over the first **Joe Montana**, but **Joe Montana SportsTalk Football** seemed to get the upper hand over **John Madden '92**.

This time, **John Madden '93** goes chip-to-chip with **NFL SportsTalk Football '93 Starring Joe Montana**. Neither game was complete as this report hits the presses, but EG's advance look at both suggests that the real winner of this competition will be America's video gamers.

NFL SportsTalk (Sega/Genesis) is a 12-meg cartridge that gives one or two coaches the chance to direct all 28 National Football League teams, each stocked with the real players. Gamers can compete against the machine, each other, or they can pool their efforts against a robot.



NFL SportsTalk is the third Joe Montana game for the Genesis.

A league structure is included in the program, or any two teams can play an exhibition. There are three levels of difficulty and a sighting cursor simplifies passing, if desired. Competitors can choice a 60-, 40-, or 20-minute game.

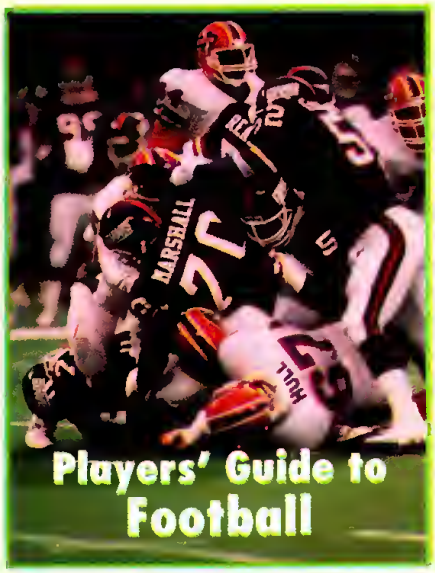
Most gamers will prefer the vertically scrolling, endzone view of the gridiron, but **Joe Montana** lets the user see the action from any of three perspectives: vertical, horizontal, and a view from a blimp. (The user can see the game from either sideline if horizontal is chosen.)

The digitized players execute real pro moves, including full spins, dives, and straight arms. The zoom feature gives gamers the pleasure of seeing really huge characters. The signature spoken play-by-play is still an important feature, and the comments seem a bit more varied than the first time around.

The celebrated football analyst gives scouting reports on both teams before every game of **John Madden '93** (Electronic Arts/SNES, Genesis). There's also a chart that compares the teams in nine areas.

The "pre-season" mode is ideal for learning the many formations and plays in **John Madden '93** (over 100 offensive and defensive), because

Season... New Games! Gridiron Glory



Passing for Electronic

John Madden '93 may be a little easier to play than **Joe Montana**, but producer Scott Orr has done his customary fine job of getting the real feel of football into the program. References to players solely by uniform number, even when all-time great teams are utilized, detracts (see *sidebar*), but this game is really about running a pro football team, not reproducing individual player performance.

Michael Zagaris/NFL Photos



it disables the play-clock, banishing the repeated delay-of-game penalties that sometimes result from unfamiliarity with the play system.

After some pre-season practice, the gamer can play a play-off tournament against the computer using either current teams or a selection of all-time great squads, including Madden's all-star club. A password system permits tournaments to be conducted over more than one session, and there is provision for two gamers to play cooperatively against the machine.

An unusual alternative is "sudden death" mode. This is a great short game in which the first team to score is the victor. Other options include the length of the quarter, type of field and weather.

After an elaborate and well-presented coin toss, action switches to the vertically scrolling playfield for the kick-off and run back. Regular play involves picking plays on the special display and then executing them on the full-screen playfield.

The control scheme is similar to the one in the previous edition. The coach uses the direction disk to cycle through choices, which are shown in a row of boxes, three at a time. Each box corresponds to an action button. Pressing the button confirms the associated selection. Madden's suggestions always appear as the center box in the row when the choices appear.

Popular Paydirt Football Gets Real

Which game will win the **Madden-Montana** showdown this time? It looks like the EA cart has the edge in ease of play, but the visual and audio pyrotechnics of Sega's entry are hard to resist. EG rates **Montana** the pre-season favorite, but both have a legitimate shot.

A Rush on the Wild Side

Super High Impact (Arena/Genesis) takes football a lot less seriously than most of the other games. Based on the Bally/Midway coin-op of the same name, **Super High Impact** doesn't pretend to reproduce the feel of real professional football. Teams are from places like Las Vegas and Africa, and you won't find your favorite players lining up on offense or defense.

Super High Impact is based on an accurate representation of the sport's essentials, but the trimmings are fan fantasies. An exaggerated level of aggression is the new element in this cartridge. Players hurl insults across the line of scrimmage, and it doesn't take much for fights to erupt all over the field.

The game play is easy to learn, but it's just tricky enough to remain challenging under repeated play. Those who don't want all the fighting can turn off that feature, though the game retains the overall combative attitude.

Time-Traveling Football

If current football action is too tame, a pair of games put a bizarre spin on the familiar oblate spheroid. One concocts a version of football that might be played in the next century, while the other imagines how gridders might have competed during the Middle Ages.

Cyberball (Jaleco/NES) turns the playfield into a battlefield. Armored Cyborgs clash in this 21st Century mutation. **Cyberball** can be enjoyed solitaire against the NES or head-to-head.

The Arch Rivals design team went in the opposite direction with **Pigskin 721 A.D.**, a Bally/Midway coin-op machine now in arcades. Fantasy adventure meets sports as arcades command a team full of half-crazed warriors. The team attitude adjustment button instructs the warriors to go out for a pass, surround the ball carrier, or even forget the game and get down to hand-to-hand fighting with the wild bunch on the other side.

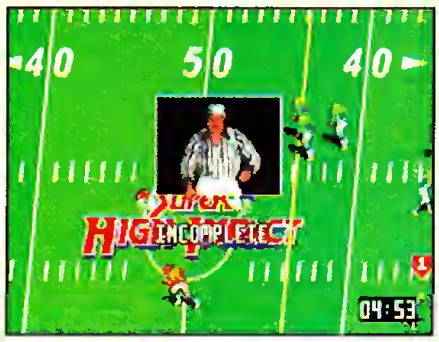
Purists may shudder, but **Pigskin 621 A.D.** delivers off-the-wall fun for those who don't take their blocking and tackling too seriously. Bally Manufacturing hasn't announced plans for a cartridge version, but it looks like a natural for the home gaming screen.



It is normal for Sports games to update every year, like Madden '93.

Football for Every Gamer

Just about every game system has at least one worthy football title. **T.V. Sports Football** (Turbo Technologies/TurboGrafx-16) brings the well-known computer game to owners of the TG16 and the Duo. This action-oriented, stat-influenced game presents the game much the way fans see it on television each week.



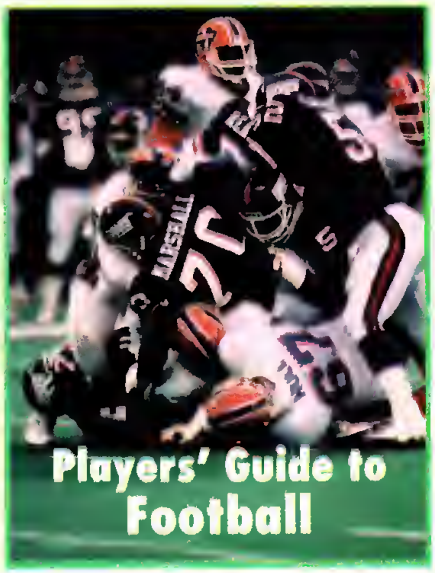
Super High Impact was translated from the ultra-hot arcade game.

Football Frenzy (SNK) serves the Neo*Geo audience. One or two gamers choose from among 10 teams, in this 48-meg cartridge. The on-screen gridders are larger and well-animated, and the zoom feature brings the crucial moment of every play into sharp focus.

Want to take your game on the road? Try **Super Action Football** (Nintendo) for the GameBoy. Allowing for differences in sound and graphics, it's fairly similar to the cartridge of the same name for the NES.

Tomorrow's Gridiron Glory

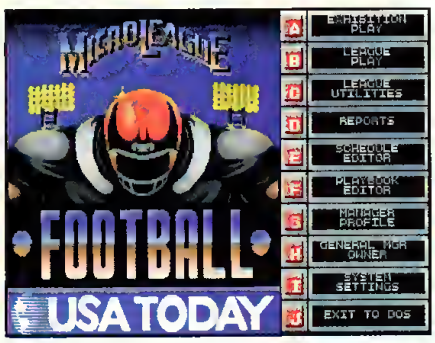
The near-future holds games from Capcom (**NFL Football**) and Razorsoft (**Jerry Glanville Football**) for the SNES, and a Sega CD edition of **Joe Montana**. Commodore is readying a CDTV action football game with a vertically scrolling playfield, which should be out to fill some cold, boring winter afternoons. The future holds better games for all systems!



Jim Nangano: Micro EG Huddles with a Top

By Arnie Katz

Jim Nangano has worked on everything from action charmers (Flip & Flop/First Star) to science fiction adventures (The Omnicron Conspiracy/Epyx). It wasn't until he left Brooklyn for Micro League Sports Association (MLSA) in Newark, DE, that this Mozart of game development got his crack at sports.



There is a growing popularity and demand for Statistical Simulations.

MLSA is the most unusual company in all of electronic gaming. Founded by college professor Barry Morstain in the mid-1980s, it has become the leading maker of sports statistical computer simulations. In a sense, it's the plugged-in equivalent of The APBA Game Company, the PA-based board game manufacturer that introduced sports stat games over 40 years ago.

Nangano's first MLSA project reunited him with Subway Software to produce the enhanced MicroLeague WWF Wrestling II. Although a cantankerous licensor sabotaged marketing plans for this strategy game, it served as Jim Nangano's introduction to the sports gaming field. The game is chiefly noted for its landmark use of digitized video output. Nangano's deft work on this phase of the game eventually led to the incorporation of video sequences into MicroLeague Baseball IV (MLSA/PC).

Seldom have artist and subject seemed more in tune than Jim Nangano and electronic sports. After working with Ed Daniels and Subway Software on a couple of projects, Jim quickly advanced to the position he now holds as MLSA's chief designer and programmer. Nangano is the man who sits in the chair when the company's product reputation is on the line.

MicroLeague Football (MLSA/PC, Macintosh) made it's debut in 1991, so when Neil Swartz told EG that MicroLeague Football II was in development, we asked Jim Nangano the inevitable: "Why?"

"Technology," he said succinctly. "It seems like everybody is using VGA cards now, and we wanted to give the game graphics that take advantage of that." MicroLeague Football II supports several graphic modes, but the VGA visuals set new standards for pigskin stat simulations.

Most of the audiovisual improvements, Jim went on to explain, were developed for MicroLeague Baseball IV and adapted to the gridiron. "Football II uses the animation routines, screen layout, and sound drivers introduced in Baseball," says Jim. "The sound effects are especially improved, thanks to John Radcliffe's Digtac program." He also lauds the graphics by Steve Suhy, now with Electronic Arts, who is best known for Twilight 2000.

From the hardcore player's point of view, the key changes are the inclusion of the General Manager/Owner module in the basic package and the introduction of the user-programmable coach.

The latter promises to make MicroLeague Football II a winner with



Graphics aren't the most important factor in Statistical football games.

solitaire stat freaks and leagues that don't play face to face. The game defaults to a middle-of-the-road coach, but the gamer can change the computerized opposition to an offense- or defense-minded skipper with a single point-and-click.

Those who crave authenticity can go the next step and program a coach from scratch. Besides the obvious benefits, this feature facilitates something many had thought impractical: a computer football mail league. Since mail leagues make the home team's owner responsible for playing out the actual contests,

administering the visiting team's game plan is a major drawback to using a computer simulation instead of a tabletop one like Strat-o-matic or APBA. The programmable coach impresses the essence of a team's strategy onto the solitaire mode, which should result in a mail league boom for the game.

"The interface is more intuitive, like Baseball IV" comments Nangano. "And it's prettier, too."

The players, twice the size of those in the original program, also look a lot better. The horizontal play field now provides a closer view of the action as it scrolls to follow the play. Other graphic upgrades include digitized video sequences, and detailed penalty calling routines.

"The sound is all digitized," Nangano says. "The biggest improvement is the implementation. Fans will find that the audio is much, much smoother this time."

Many would say that sound is a relatively minor issue in a stat game, but trimming rough edges is a personal mission for this perfectionist. It's no coincidence that his ascent at MLSA has coincided with a sharp drop in glitches in the company's products.

Most likely, Jim feels that way because he's an avid gamer. Even while he's working on a game in his home development studio, Jim is already thinking about the hours he'll spend playing it. This enthusiastic fan—he lives and dies with the New York Mets—is as ready to whip into those replays as any of MLSA's legion of armchair coaches.

Asked about the toughest thing to simulate in a football game, Jim had two answers. "On a practical level, it's getting the tackling animation right," he said.

"In the statistical model, it's the team concept," he continued."Unlike baseball, foot ball is more team oriented. When we began testing Football II, the stats came back right, but not the team records. We added a 'red zone' rating for offense and defense to correct that." The rating, based on previous season team performance, adjusts effectiveness when the ball is within 20 yards of a touchdown. A team with a low offensive red zone rating gets more field goals and less touchdowns, while a high red zone rating yields more touchdowns than three pointers.

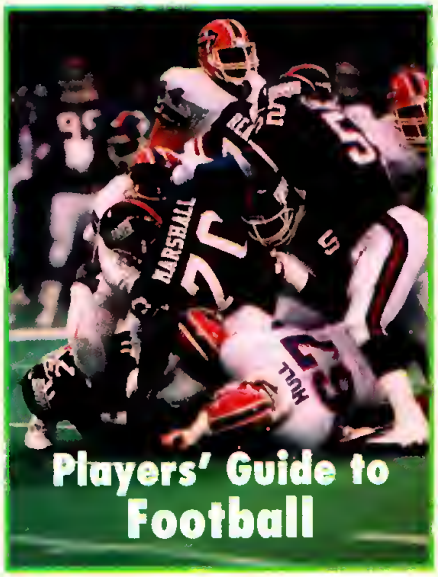
Like any gamer, Jim Nangano dreams of the ultimate pigskin simulation. "It'd have a design-a-playbook mode that works with point and click interface," he speculates. "And full digitized speech, including play-by-play and color commentary."

There is one difference between Jim Nangano and "any gamer," though. This is one dreamer with the talent and drive to make his wishes come true.



Scott Cunningham/NFL Photos

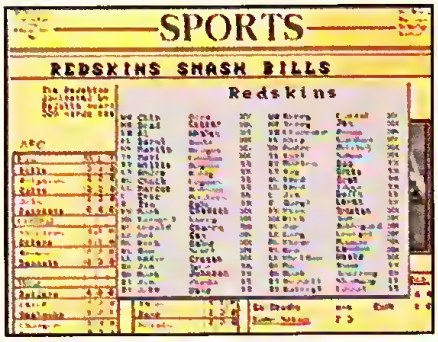
League's Macro Talent Designer/Programmer



Park Place Two Breakthrough

By Bill Kunkel

A diehard football fan scoring a job at the leading development house for electronic sports simulations has got to feel as if a prayer has been answered. But for Christopher Whaly, that was just the teaser. First, he was hired to work as a producer for



John Madden producer, Christopher Whaly, brings his talents to Konami.

Park Place/Spirit of Discovery, Mike Knox' and Troy Lyndon's top line sports development group and creators of such classics as **John Madden Football** (Electronic Arts/Genesis) and **NHL Hockey** (Electronic Arts/Genesis). Then came the really interesting news: Whaly would be subjected to trial by athletic fire, inheriting Park Place's football franchise along with an instant mandate: oversee a state-of-the-art action-strategy gridiron simulation for the Super-NES while simultaneously ramrodding a totally unique football strategy contest for IBM PCs.

An early difficulty with the video game, **NFL Football** for the Super-NES, was that although a deal had been cut to use the NFL name as well as the names of the various NFL franchises, no such agreement was inked with the NFLPA, the organization representing the rights to the names, likenesses, etc. of the actual NFL players. Publisher Konami obviously felt that individual player names were not crucial, since football in the video game medium is generally action-oriented, with just enough strategic input to keep things interesting. Many football video games have done quite well without ever identifying the guys in the uniforms.

"The only thing that [the gamers will be] lacking are the players' actual names," Christopher reasoned in his easygoing, low-key manner. He also assured us that Park Place would not be pulling the old gimmick of providing fictitious players with names that blatantly correspond to the monikers of famous football stars — making "Joe Montana" into "John Nevada" for example, or transforming "Lawrence Taylor" into "Dorrance Traylor". As a matter of fact, no names are even used in NFL Football, with players referred to only by position. Whaly reasoned that if the gamer is manipulating a team based on the San Francisco 49ers, and the running backs, tackles, kickers, linemen, QB, etc. play just like the real 49ers, what's difference does it make whether they have the names of the actual stars?

But Christopher feels the game's strongest selling point will be its extensive and meaningful use of the Super-NES's vaunted Mode 7 technology. "At first," he explained, "you're just going to marvel at the graphics," referring to the way the camera swoops and rolls and follows the ball from a variety of angles both in the air and on the field. "Next, you're going to have to practice with it a little to get the feel of things." After all, most gamers are accustomed to team sports simulations that take place on a visually anchored field. Even if the field scrolled, aside from the east-west movement, everything else was in stasis. In NFL Football, the whole world seems to sweep away periodically. But once the simple tricks of perspective are mastered, ah, what joys await the electronic grid maven!

"You've just got to follow the ball," Whaly suggests. "That's what the game does."

Whaly feels **NFL Football** is a first rate effort, but he's clearly most



The PC NFL football features multi-screen, full motion video.

proud of the way the Park Place development team has transformed the Mode-7 effects into something more than a cheap visual thrill. "We are the only ones out there who have integrated rotation into the game

Producer Tackles Grid Games



Live video and voice, are featured throughout the PC NFL Football.

itself," he maintains. "Some other games may throw it in, but it isn't a part of the game, it's just some visual frill."

NFL Football will also feature speech, but the developers made a conscious decision not to give the game ongoing play-by-play, as heard in Sega's Genesis **Sports Talk** games. "There will be quite a bit of speech," Whaly acknowledged. "But we want to use it to add excitement to the game. I think using speech to create radio-type [play-by-play] winds up detracting from the excitement. I want the announcer to let the fans know when someone has scored a touchdown, but I don't need to hear him tell them: 'He's at the 50, he's at the 45, he's at the 40,' and so on."

Although Christopher is clearly amped over **NFL Football**, it's also not hard to see that he's positively passionate about his computer project, **NFL Video Pro Football**, for IBM PC and compatibles, and also published by Konami. "It's my baby," he admits with quiet pride.

What is **NFL Video Pro Football** like? Imagine being the god of football and your combination Valhalla/War Room is the Sports Book at Caesar's Palace, and the idea begins to come clear.

The game screen is filled with miniature tv screens, each simultaneously running a different NFL football game. And, in good network fashion, the score is dutifully superimposed regularly at the bottom of each mini-screen. At any time, the player can click on any of the games that they are displeased with and take over the team of their choice, calling plays, kicking butts and changing strategy at will.

Ah, the power!

Whaly put it this way: "The cerebral football fan is definitely the one we're targeting here." Which is probably Christopher's diplomatic way of saying that this is the game for football nuts!

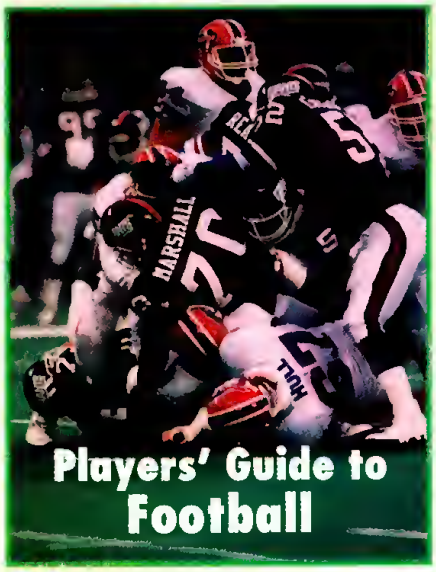
The obvious question that arises when viewing this spectacular piece of sports software, with its mind boggling, eye-popping multitude of action taking place on fourteen black and white mini-screens, is this: this baby has got to be destined for CD-ROM, correct?

After a few seconds of cogitating, Christopher admits it. "Yeah, we are developing a CD version, with all the screens in color. But I can't tell you what platform it's for."

Speaking for football fans everywhere: we can't wait!

Ron Vesely/NFL Photos





Stat Simulations: The Ultimate Coaching Test

An Introduction to Statistical Football

By Arnie Katz & Bill Kunkel

The major difference between action and stat football is the player's role in the proceedings. The gamer personally directs on-screen athletes in the former, but sticks to brainwork in the latter.

At the heart of every statistical football simulation is a complex mathematical model. The interaction of computer formulas (algorithms) determines play results. Individual players do their stuff based on real-life performance, usually the previous season's stats.

Unlike rotisserie and fantasy football, statistical simulations don't just plug numbers into an abstract formula. Humans, or computer stand-ins, call every play from coin toss to final gun. Like Paul Brown and Vince Lombardi, the stat gamer creates the tactics that make the best use of the available talent. The run-and-shoot works only as well as the players who are asked to run it.

Shuffling all the players into a pile and assembling a team from scratch in a draft league is the ultimate stat gaming thrill. The players is owner and general manager as well as coach. Building a team from scratch and, perhaps, guiding it through season after season sparks an identification between player and team that is in a different league from coaching stock squads.

MicroLeague Football (MLSA/PC) is probably the top stat game at the present time. It will soon be superseded by **MicroLeague Football II** (see Jim Nangano interview elsewhere in this section), but its combination of visual appeal and statistical detail make it especially good for single games and extended season replays. Draft leagues are possible with the General Manager/Owner program,



MicroLeague Football 2, offers the best graphics in a Stat. Simulation.

Dave Holt's **NFL Pro Football** (MicroPlay/PC) is not as picture pretty as **MicroLeague Football,** but the accuracy of its simulation is second to none. Another big plus is that **NFL Pro Football** is especially designed for those who enjoy leagues, both face to face and via modem.

Statistical football simulations offer a special brand of mental stimulation and entertainment.

Rob Brown/NFL Photos



"Nice Shot."



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MONSTERS, MAGIC
A SURVEY OF ELECTRONIC

By Bill Kunkel

From the cute ghosts of **Pac-Man** to the central casting creatures that make up most of the sprites in **Ghouls & Ghosts**, monsters of all types and temperament have been a staple of electronic entertainment since the very first **Space Invaders** thump-thump-thumped down-screen in the late '70s. Question: if boogymen are so popular among gamers, why are so few games genuinely scary?

The subject of horror and how it works has probably been debated since the dawn of man. Why do we enjoy being frightened? What is it about monsters that elicits fear in us? And why have game designers been so eager to employ them as targets and so reluctant to explore their ability to evoke fear? The last question has an obvious answer: it's easier to use monsters as props than as instruments of fright.

In films and literature, the most common type of scare is the sudden shock, such as the monster popping out of a closet. Another is the slow build-up to a frightening conclusion. This method was effective in the film *Jaws*. Sometimes, both methods are blended to deliver a good scare.



In Splatterhouse 2 you hack and slash through a haunted house.

Done well, even repetition does not dull the impact. The simplest example of this is a jack-in-the-box. The first time the box explodes open and a spring-based jester bursts into view, the abruptness of the appearance provides a sudden shock. Subsequently, however, the user knows what will happen. Yet, as he turns the crank, his body tenses, bracing for the shock to come. The climax always occurs at the same point, yet the user still jumps when the jester springs out.

The electronic equivalent of the jack-in-the-box, which could introduce variety by using a randomizer to determine when the lid would pop open, is all but non-existent. The early LucasFilm game, **Rescue on Fractalus**, produced the first serious scare in electronic gaming history. It periodically replaced downed human pilots being rescued with an alien monster. The first time the monster appears, rearing up before the ship's cockpit and smashing the transparent enclosure with its huge fists, the user is startled, even genuinely frightened. Subsequently, however, the ability to scare the user is retained, albeit in different form. The user tenses as each pilot scrambles toward the ship. Is it just another pilot? Or is it a monster?

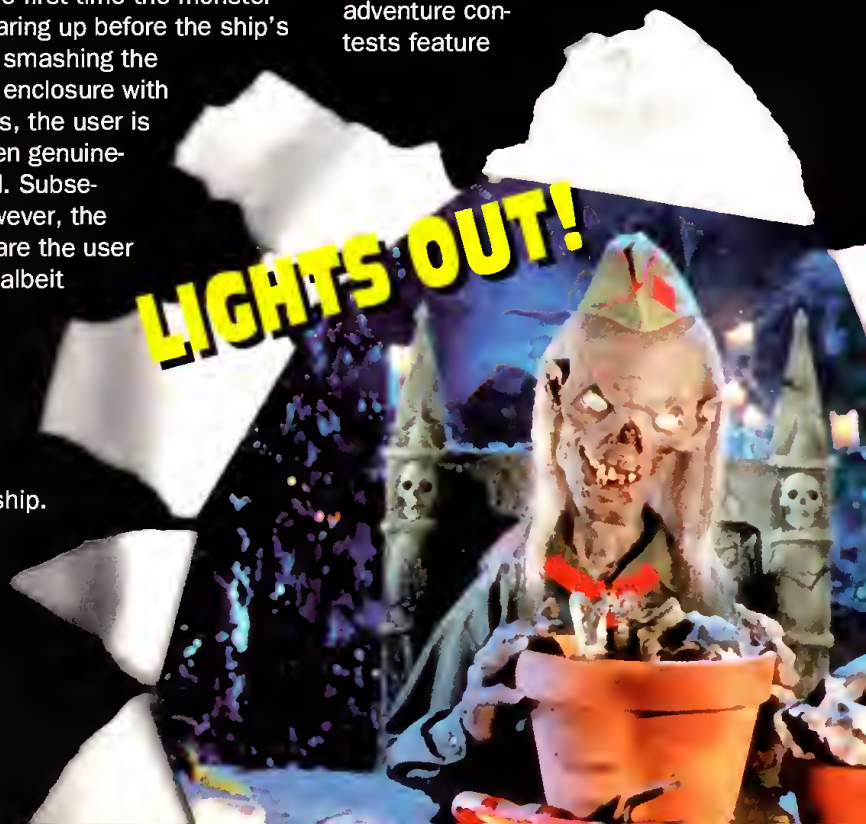


Creepy creatures await wayward adventurers in Ultima Underworld.

Rescue on Fractalus was published almost a decade ago. Let's take a look at how far we've come by examining some of the most recent scary software releases.

Magical Monsters of Fantasyland

In the boogyman body count, no genre boasts more monsters than fantasy games. Both role-playing and adventure contests feature



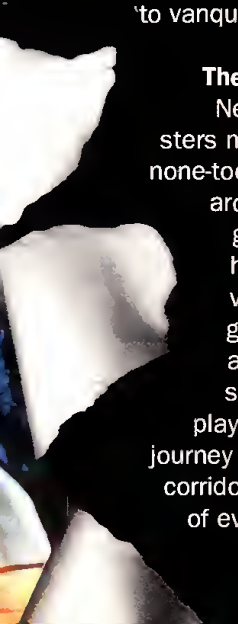
& MAYHEM!
SPINE TINGLERS

more ogres, trolls, and dragons per byte than any other category.

On the video game front, recent entries to this field include **Shining in the Darkness** (Sega/Genesis), **Gargoyle's Quest II** (Capcom/NES), **Cadash** (Taito/Genesis), **Arcana** (HAI/SNES), **Drakkhen** (Seika/SNES) and **Ultima: Quest of the Avatar** (FCI/NES).

Computer titles are just as numerous. **Ultima Underworld: The Stygian Abyss** (Origin/PC), **Daemonsgate I — Dorovan's Key** (Gametek/Amiga, PC), **Shadowlands** (Domark/Amiga, PC), **Challenge of the Five Realms** (Paragon/PC), **Kyrandia** (Westwood/PC), and **Darklands** (MicroProse/PC) are among the many beastie-bearing adventures which have slithered onto software shelves in recent months.

These games employ traditional RPG and adventure game formats, including the usual complement of fantasy-based fiends. The monsters in these games are used almost exclusively as obstacles rather than instruments of horror, with the user required to solve a puzzle or summon up a particular spell in order to vanquish them.



The Target is Terror

Next to adventures, monsters most often rear their none-too-attractive heads in arcade-style action games. The monsters here serve largely as visually interesting targets. These contests are almost exclusively side-scrollers, with the player-character forced to journey down a gauntlet-like corridor filled with creatures of ever-increasing power.

Rick once again dons a Jason-like hockey mask in **Splatterhouse 2** (Namco/Genesis), and sets out to body check eight levels full of zombies, killer fish and poisonous reptiles. Although basically a combat game with emphasis on Rick's fighting ability, it offers users a unique and visually compelling nightmare world.

In **Night Creatures** (TTI/TG-16), the player-character has been bitten by a bat-like beast known as a "Hecate" and must go on a multi-stage, side-scrolling quest, battling an army of witches, swamp monsters, glow-in-the-dark doggies and other thing that go bump in the night in order to cleanse his body of the curse.

Contra III: The Alien Wars (Konami/SNES) and **Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts** (Capcom/SNES) offer similar creature feature thrills, highlighted by stunning graphics and predictable action. Contra III has commando types battling an invasion by a rogues' gallery of extra-terrestrials while the Capcom entry is the latest and greatest take on the long-time classic.

Speaking of classics, Mary Shelley's **Frankenstein — A Modern Prometheus** has been the inspiration for more adaptations than any other monster on the block. The latest is Ban Dai's **Frankenstein: The Monster Returns** for the NES, in which the player is cast as a knight in armor, battling Frankenstein's undead creation.

Even the handhelds are getting in on the action, most notably in Atari's Lynx conversion of the Psygnosis computer game, **Shadow of the Beast**. The graphics are amazing, and the creatures, including leather-winged harpies and scaly demons,

Serious Scares

This year has brought us several serious attempts at creating genuinely creepy electronic entertainment. **Beyond Shadowgate** (Turbo Technologies/PC and TG-16 with CD-ROM drive). was developed by the creators of the original Shadowgate, ICOM Simulations. This sequel promises some impressive technological credentials. ICOM is also developing a more traditional video game, **Shapeshifter**, also for the TurboGrafx-16 with CD-ROM drive.

Cyberdreams' **Darkseed** (based on works by H.R. Giger) is the story of Mike Dawson, an ordinary guy unlucky enough to have a "cyber-embryo" implanted in his brain by (who else?) aliens during a nightmarish dream sequence. Dawson, the character, has three days before the embryo hatches, doing his brain very little good in the process. He must find the nexus to a subterranean world and locate the source of his problems. **Darkseed** has a great look and makes a genuine effort to induce chills.

Causing chills has never been a problem for Stephen King, whose literary success in the horror genre is unprecedented. **The Dark Half** (Capstone/PC) is the first attempt to bring King to electronic gaming since an early text adventure adaptation of his short story, *The Mist*. The novel and the game deal with the plight of successful writer Thad Beaumont, who suddenly finds himself being stalked by his own fictional creation, George Stark. Stark is a great villain; amoral, ruthless and a master of the art of violence.

The willingness of publishers to take the time and money to license work by artists of King and Giger's caliber indicates a belief that monsters can be more than just cardboard cutouts. — *Bill Kunkel*

MONSTERS, MAGIC & MAYHEM!
A SURVEY OF ELECTRONIC SPINE TINGLERS



are visually impressive, though not likely to keep gamers up nights with troubled dreams. Still, the overall effort to add a sense of the macabre to a basic adventure/shooter game comes off quite well.

Ghouls and Giggles

Laughing in the dark, like whistling past a graveyard, is a classic reaction to fright. We laugh at the things which frighten us, thereby diminishing their power over us.

A classic example of this is Charles Addams' **The Addams Family**, which enjoyed success as a magazine cartoon, TV show, and, most recently, as a hit movie for Paramount. It is this most recent incarnation which sparked the licensing of Addams' creation to Ocean, which adapted America's favorite mega-eccentrics to the SNES, NES and Game Boy. All three versions of The Addams Family are based on the same theme: Morticia has been snatched by the what must be the bravest (or dumbest) kidnappers in history. The gamer, cast as Gomez, must reunite the family, collect the million dollar ransom and rescue Morticia.



Shadow of the Beast offers a twist, the player is the hideous monster.

Other less-than-serious games employing monsters include **Ghoul School** (Electro Brain/NES), a side-scrolling action adventure set in a school infested with weird creatures; the pun-ishingly titled **Ghost Manner** (ICOM/TG-16), a haunted house video game; and **Castle of Dr. Brain** (Sierra On-Line/PC), a collection of kinetic puzzles set in the mansion of a mad scientist.

The Bigger the Badder

The great thing about monsters is their amazing range. There are fat monsters and skinny monsters, monsters with three eyes, one eye, or no eyes. There are little monsters (everything from dolls possessed by evil spirits to the swarming horror of Hitchcock's *The Birds*) and there most certainly are BIG monsters.

Big monsters generally come in two flavors: dinosaurs revived from their eons-long slumber, perhaps by an atomic bomb, and ordinary-sized critters who just keep on growing, often due to the health-giving effects of radiation. Electronic gaming's most famous use of the latter type was Cinemaware's classic, **It Came From the Desert**, in which insects



Giant bugs are on the menu in NES's, It Came from the Desert.

grow to gigantic size as a result of (you guessed it!) atomic bomb testing. The most recent version was published by NEC as a CD-based title for the TurboGrafx-16. In this, the character must convince the citizens that all the atomic testing has had an unexpected effect on insect life, and lead the effort to destroy the big bugs. The new version incorporates non-interactive scenes using real actors in live action video sequences with superb arcade-style graphics for the game sequences.



Horror takes a back seat in the freaky, Castle of Doctor Brain.

Other recent entries in the big beast sweepstakes are **King of the Monsters** (Takara/SNES), and its sequel, **King of the Monsters 2** (SNK/Neo-Geo). In both games, players control a selected monster each with special, super-powers and pit it against other behemoths, all battling

for dominance in our cities. Both games offer solid action, good graphics and a few tingles.

Closing the Lid

Mostly, the creatures from our nightmares have been co-opted and demythologized, reduced to props and targets. But certainly, there is someone out there with the vision and ability to rehabilitate these sorry denizens of the dark side, to remake them into the icons of fear they were created to be.

In the meantime, fellow gamers, make sure you check under the bed before sleeping, use a night light and...

Keep watching the skies.

Pinball from Hell

Two of this year's horror-themed game releases were electronic pinball simulations. In addition to the already available TurboGrafx-16 titles from NEC, Alien Crush and Devil's Crush, that makes four pinball simulations with creepy themes!

The newcomers are Dragon's Fury (Tengen/Genesis) and Devilish (Sage's Creation/Game Gear). Dragon's Fury is three screens high and bristling with supernatural images. In addition to the standard board, there are six bonus levels.

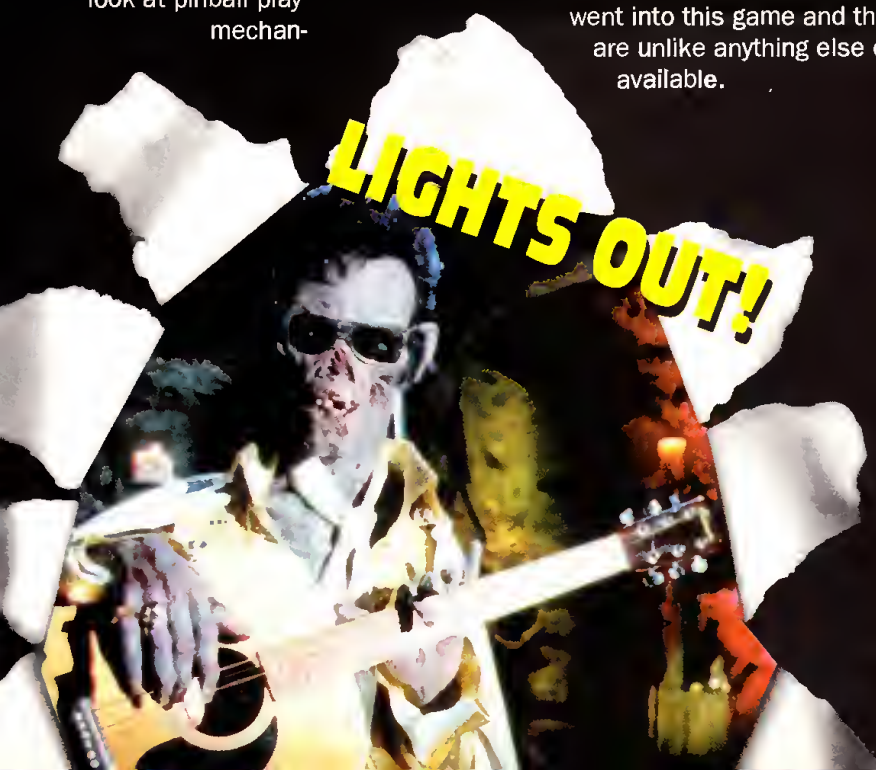
Devilish takes a less traditional look at pinball play mechanics, with a movable paddle replacing the traditional flippers. The player must fight through eight visually themed levels (Waterfalls, Ice World, etc.). The enemies encountered by the player are also more like a video game than classic pinball. There are battling skeletons, deadly dolls and even unique traps and bonuses. Though neither game is likely to inspire nightmares, they make excellent use of horror icons to create a superb visual environment.



Devils Crush (Dragon Fury on the Genesis) is horrific pinball action.

A Look At
The 7th Guest
By Russ Ceccola

The first CD-only title from design group Trilobyte, **The 7th Guest** is bound to set standards for all CD entertainment in future years. Over two years of preparation and work went into this game and the results are unlike anything else currently available.



A Byte to the Neck

Vampires are hot. At press time, two major movies from big-name directors, as well as a score of lower budget efforts, await release. *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is managed by Francis Ford Coppola, whose *Godfather* films redefined the gangster genre, while John Landis, director of *An American Werewolf in London* and *Twilight Zone—The Movie*, returns to the horror genre with *Innocent Blood*.

If either or both of these films strikes paydirt, we can expect to see a revival of interest in vampires that could spread to electronic gaming, where bloodsuckers have been largely moribund. Two new entries in an ever-popular series have darkened the days of gamers everywhere: **Super Castlevania IV** (Konami/SNES) and a conversion of **Castlevania 2** (Konami/Game Boy). Both games are arcade-style quests in which the player, cast as vampire hunter Simon Belmont, must stalk his evil nemesis, Count Dracula, through a series of atmospheric sets.

The Game Boy entry is extremely well done, though quite similar to the original, while **Super Castlevania IV** makes excellent use of the sound and graphics capabilities of the SNES to summon up mist-shrouded bogs and swamps as well as the interior of the Count's castle.

For those who can't get enough, there's **Nosferatu** (Seta/SNES), essentially a cross between the Castlevania series and Prince of Persia. This game sends the player-character on a standard action-adventure quest through a beautifully rendered castle interior.

Perhaps the ignition of a vampire craze, sparked by the many forthcoming films, will even spread to game machines. After all, gaming may have driven a joystick through vampires' hearts, but as everyone knows, you can't keep a good bloodsucker down.

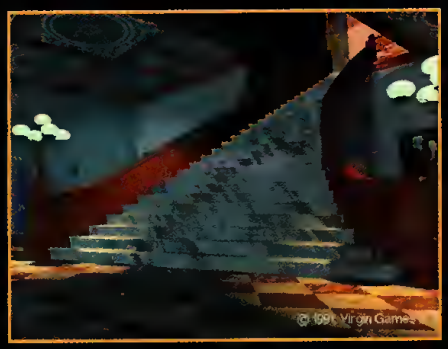
— Bill Kunkel

MONSTERS, MAGIC & MAYHEM!
A SURVEY OF ELECTRONIC SPINE TINGLERS

Graeme Devine and Rob Landeros, two computer game veterans who headed the R&D department at Virgin Games, saw the potential for CD entertainment long before many others were ready to commit. Virgin was not quite ready for CD technology, so the duo, as Landeros put it, "almost forced ourselves out of our old jobs because of our interest in CD games." They decided to start Trilobyte to serve this market. Devine explained, "the idea was to form a company that could take advantage of CD-ROM drives and start producing CD-specific titles."

The quality of the talent involved in the production is a major factor. Devine and Landeros head the group, as Technical Director and Creative Director, respectively. Author Matthew Costello contributed the haunted house story, with the goal "to put out a game with dramatic content as well as special effects," according to Landeros.

The music, by the Fat Man,



It is hard to imagine a game looking or feeling more realistic than this.

gaming's most recognized composer, is almost as haunting as the ghostly images and ghoulish plot. Other artists and programmers worked on the game, with Robert Stein III contributing the 3D modeling for each scene, a painstaking process in which each of the 30,000 scenes took 12 to 17 minutes to render. The design team developed an authoring system called Groovy for the creation of Guest and future titles, and also to prepare the game for multiple platforms. A Groovy system is necessary for each machine, but the Groovy code for a particular game will be the same on each one.

The game sends the player into Old Man Stauf's house to investigate the deaths of nearby children who



The depth and realism in 7th Guest gives the game a life of its own.

received toys from the crone, and to watch as six invited guests discover the reason for their presence in the mansion. The detailed 22-room mansion is peppered with ghosts and other strange spirits, all created by rotoscoping live actors and actresses against blue screen backgrounds and then compositing them into the computer-drawn scenes, not unlike techniques from recent science-fiction films. Seven primary actors and about 20 extras make up the cast.

Guest is the first game to require this much memory and storage. At press time, the game spanned two CDs — about 3,000 floppy disks. Landeros confessed that "it's kind of an impossible house, with rooms with illogical entrances. One of the better decisions we made was to do a supernatural game to give us a lot of freedom."

Guest concentrates on the spooky elements in horror, rather than the gory or gruesome. Landeros and Devine hope that some scenes will chill players to the bone and, as Devine stated, "aim the game more toward the family and their pace than to the avid player. In either case, the player will certainly be entertained and, hopefully, truly frightened."

The 7th Guest is a wonderful experience and the first game to truly take advantage of the medium. Turn down the lights, turn up the volume and prepare for a chilling weekend in Old Man Stauf's mansion.



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By Marc Camron

On a hot day in July, I am walking through a department store, when a memory comes over me like a flood. It was almost exactaly thirteen years ago, on a similar day, in a similar store, an event took place that would change my life forever.

It was on this day that I purchased my first video game system. Of course I had Pong before, but this was different. This was wonderful. Atari had come up with a system that played a lot of different games, not just a few built in ones. The system cost $149.99 and was considered state of the art. The graphics in the original 2600 games were nothing more than some two-dimensional boxes and blocks. The sounds a beep here and a twang there. But it was revolutionary for the time, and the public ate it up.

Not much later, just a year or two, the personal computer hit the scene. The earliest PCs sported a touch-pad for a keyboard, used a household cassette player for memory storage, and offered 6K of RAM (12K with the upgrade kit). They sold for about $500 and were really just an expensive toy.

Travel forward just over ten years. Available in most electronic stores are 16-Bit game systems, sporting sophisticated 3-D graphics, stereo sound, and games few thought possible for playing at home. The top two, Sega's Genesis and Nintendo's Super NES list at $129.99 and $149.99 respectively. This includes a game controllers and the machine. Scaled down packages are available for under $100 for those who aren't interested in the game offered with the system. additional cartridges can be purchased for $44.99 to $69.99, occasionally less and rarely more expensive.

Cross the isle and you may find the computers. A 386 SX, with 120 Meg hard-drive, 8Meg of RAM, dual floppy drives, VGA Graphics, VGA monitor, and a printer can be bought for about twice that of the stripped down 6K model.

Still, people complain about what the systems and games cost.

It is true, that to manufacture a game does not cost that much. The price of memory chips has gone down, and the 16Meg Street fighter II is not that much more costly than the Asteroids cartridge ten years ago. CDs are even less expensive to produce, and much faster. What the general public often fails to recognize the other work that goes into the production (not manufacture) of a video or computer game.

Every game starts with an idea. "You have a blue furry animal, and he can run really fast. Some bad guy has turned all of his equally furry woodland buddies into robots, and now our hero must rescue them." This is a good start, but until they come up with a machine that will create a game as you describe it, there is a little more to be done.

After the concept is complete, artist go to work on turning that concept into something usable. Characters must be designed, and backgrounds figured out. I must be decided how the game



TECHNOLOGY $$$

will play, and the number and specifications of the different levels must be decided on. After the artist finish, the programmers take over.

It is up to the programmers to take the artist information and turn it into information the computer will understand. The way the characters move, the way the backgrounds scroll, any power-ups, and how the program should react when object come in contact with each other must all be written into code. There are thousands of lines of code for each program, and the code can be very complex.

The "engine" of the game is the most important part. Here lies the core of the program. If an engine is not properly programmed the game will play poorly, and people don't buy lousy games. Fortunately, once the engine is programmed, it can be used for other games in the future. In some ways this is good, but pity the man who comes up with a new and revolutionary idea. There is a considerable extra expense every time an engine must be created from scratch.

While the programmers are working on the game code, composers are creating the music and sound effects that will play throughout the game. With the sophistication made possible by the sound chips (and soon the CD systems) today, much more care must be taken when programming the sound.

When the sound is finished, it must be given to the programmers and incorporated into the game. The programmers are constantly being called on to tighten the information, as to meet the memory constraints of the game cartridge.

There must be documentation for the game. A manual and perhaps even maps. These must be designed and printed. This also holds true for the packaging and any advertising materials needed.

Finally, when the game is finished, published, and ready to sell, there are still more expenses.

There is advertising, distribution, and the paychecks for everyone who worked on the game. The company, distributors, and retailers must make a profit. There is also the research and development costs of the next game. It is like the cycle never stops.

Now the game is ready for the consumer. How long is the average person going to play the game? If 100 hours of enjoyment is derived from a $69.99 game, that is roughly 70¢ an hour, less if it is played by more than one person. Today, a movie costs about $3.00 an hour.

Is 70¢ an hour too much to pay for a good time? Most people would say no. Of course there are games that are so lousy that 70¢ an hour is far too much, let alone the $50 you payed for the 20 minutes you played the game before throwing it in the closed.

Still, smart shopping will provide gamers with one of the cheapest forms of entertainment available. If there is such a thing in today's economy, video games are a bargain.



Super Maio Bros. was revolutionary for its time. The game was 256K.



1992's Street Fighter II is the new revolution, weighing in at 16 Meg.



And memory isn't even a factor for the future, with CD-ROM games.



Apogee:

The Height of Shareware

Wolfenstein 3-D Shoots Down Commercial Games

by Ross Chamberlain

Shareware sucks. Everyone knows it. It's cranked out by semi-talented hackers in dingy little rooms. So when Apogee Software Productions of Garland, Tex., debuted **Wolfenstein 3-D,** it sent shockwaves through every design/development department in the industry.

Wolfenstein 3-D is an action/adventure game that rips the state-of-the-art envelope for DOS systems wide open. Its real-time, full-screen, first-person perspective is disconcertingly fast and furious, so much so that calls constantly come in from players who experience some vertigo as they negotiate the corridors of the Nazi castle-fortress. Details of the surroundings are complete with stone or woodgrain textures on the walls, fabric tapestries and metallic doors - it almost approaches a kind of virtual reality. In systems with sound cards, this is further heightened with digitized sound effects and a musical score.

Although Apogee is not prepared to discuss it, it is a sequel of sorts to a classic game for the Apple II, called **Castle Wolfenstein**, designed by Silas Warner and published by Muse Software in the early 1980s. It featured a top-down view of the halls of the fortress, populated by characters viewed in profile. Perhaps state-of-the art for its time, it did pretty well, and had its share of imitators.

Apogee's **Wolfenstein 3-D** retains some elements of the other game's play-action, which is, essentially, to traverse the castle's various levels, seeking treasure and escape, while methodically blasting away at the omnipresent enemy. Its powerful



Castle Wolfenstein 3-D is a triumph in first person "dungeon" games.

play engine, with animated graphics and vivid realization of the forbidding game environment, bring it into another dimension.

Priced to beat the competition, it has sold extremely well and generated excitement across a large segment of the industry. How much? Apogee claims it received offers to distribute the game from several of the top commercial game producers and distributors.

But Apogee is doing just fine on its own, thank you. The fact is that while **Wolfenstein 3-D** apparently appeared out of the blue, it is only the latest in an ongoing evolution. Apogee represents one of the most remarkable, if unheralded success stories in the entertainment software industry. It has developed only over the last five years... but that's more than a generation in software terms.

In fact, the company has one of the best-selling lines of game

software for DOS systems around. Yet, outside of certain comparatively limited circles, the game, and the company that produced it, are rarely heard of and never advertised.

Why is that? It is marketed via shareware, an area of the software market that is largely ignored or disparaged—except for the thousands of consumers that regularly check catalogs and bulletin boards nationwide for accessible and usually inexpensive programs.

The best outlet for hobbyist programmers, the shareware approach is deceptively simple. It boils down to "Try it, but buy it only if you like it." Products are available free, or for the costs of either downloading from a BBS or copying the requisite disk or disks. In contrast to commercial software, the distribution of copied shareware is not just allowed, it's encouraged.

How can this be a viable, much less profitable, business venture? This takes a variety of forms, but most can be summed up as: *support.*

As with most software, the user is urged to register with its publisher, but in this case registration includes purchase. What the buyer receives in return for the money is, usually, printed documentation, an updated



Spear of Destiny is the newly released sequel to Wolfenstein.

version of the program and sometimes automatic future upgrades and access to technical support.

Some publishers actually just release a cut-down version of their programs as shareware and only distribute the full, or expanded, program to registered users. Such truncated shareware is usually fully operational, unlike demos supplied by many major commercial publishers, but limited in scope, or without certain enhancements.

Traditionally, most shareware is business or utility-oriented, with some outstanding stars in a field of would-be clones. For many years, in the area of games and other entertainment software, there was comparatively little innovative work. Hence, its lowly image.

In 1987, Scott Miller developed and brought into the shareware market an adventure game, Kingdom of Kroz. Heavy on puzzle solving, it was described by some as "the thinking man's game." Its success encouraged him to continue in the genré, so he produced sequels.

Better than that, however, he hit on a marketing approach that practically guaranteed new sales. He applied a variation of the expanded program technique to a concept that had proven highly successful for adventure novel publishers and adventure movie makers: the trilogy.

Only the first episode in any set is distributed free as shareware. That game is complete within itself, but it only begins the overall story, containing the seeds of another tale or two. On registration and purchase, Apogee sends the rest of the package.

Prices are kept attractive, ranging from $25 for some of the early CGA-only games, such as the Kroz series, Pharoah's Tomb, or Monuments of Mars!, to $30 or $35 for EGA/VGA games including Crystal Caves, Secret Agent, Duke Nukum and the Commander Keen series (six episodes under three titles: Invasion of the Vorticons, Goodbye Galaxy! and Aliens Ate My Babysitter). Wolfenstein 3-D, for VGA only, is $35 for the initial trilogy, and a set of additional missions is $20. Several combination sets are available at discounted prices, and whenever a customer buys a game, samples of other new games are enclosed in the package.

Invasion of the Vorticons enjoyed the distinction of being ranked number one on the Shareware Top Ten list for 16 months.

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(PCGames)

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Apogee:

The Height of Shareware

Duke Nukum also hit the top spot for several months. Apogee's proudest moment came last year at the Software Industry's first annual awards competition when the Commander Keen series took the Best Overall trophy, competing not just with other entertainment software (where its chief rivals were other Apogee games) but all shareware produced over the previous 10 years. The vision of one game-happy designer sitting in a basement room, programming his guts out, hardly applies in this case. Apogee currently has some 50 personnel. It enjoys international sales, with representatives in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France and Germany. In addition to catalog and rack vendor sales, Apogee's greatest distribution is through bulletin boards. It has its own BBS, a forum on America Online, and a section called Apogee Games Collection on Exec-PC. According to Steven Blackburn, vice president of operations, Apogee's BBS gets 2,000 calls a day.

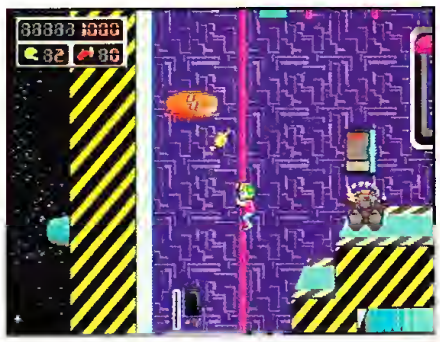
Apogee is also a member of the Shareware Trade Association and Resource (STAR) and the Software Publishers Association (SPA), and, in association with the latter, is very active in anti-piracy efforts. Piracy in shareware? Of course. It's as much a plague for them as it is for any of the more traditionally distributed lines, and for the same reasons. Shareware is not free; it is a commercial product with a different marketing approach.

As president, Miller oversees nine programming teams, including free lancers as well as those on salary. One of the independent teams, ID Software, is responsible for some of the most technically advanced games Apogee has produced, including the Commander Keen series and Wolfenstein 3-D.

According to Blackburn, elements important to all of Apogee's line, are, first, that the games should be fun. "We try to create interesting characters and an involving story line," he said. "And they should be frustration-free.

"We've all experienced games that are impossible to complete," he acknowledged, citing unsolvable puzzles, impassible traps, overwhelming enemy onslaughts. "We've tried to eliminate those." Nevertheless, there are four difficulty levels, ranging from "Can I play, Daddy" for inexperienced younger players to "I Am Death Incarnate" for a real bloodthirsty challenge.

All game progress levels are designed to be completed, but players can make frequent saves, and an on-screen prompt even encour-



Commander Keen is another of Apogee's most popular series.

ages them to do so at the end of each level. Moreover, registered copies come with cheat sheets, revealing codes for extra men, health or firepower, and, if needed, registered players can phone a hint line for help. "Our tech reps can work them through any situation they're up against," says Blackburn.

New games are constantly in the works, for Apogee including some educational works such as Number Rescue, a follow-up to Word Rescue released earlier this year. And the ID Software team is chomping at the bit to keep moving at and beyond the cutting edge of computer game technology.

Apogee has revealed that it is ready to confront the Big Boys. But perhaps more significantly, it has shown that shareware is not just for the hobbyist any more.

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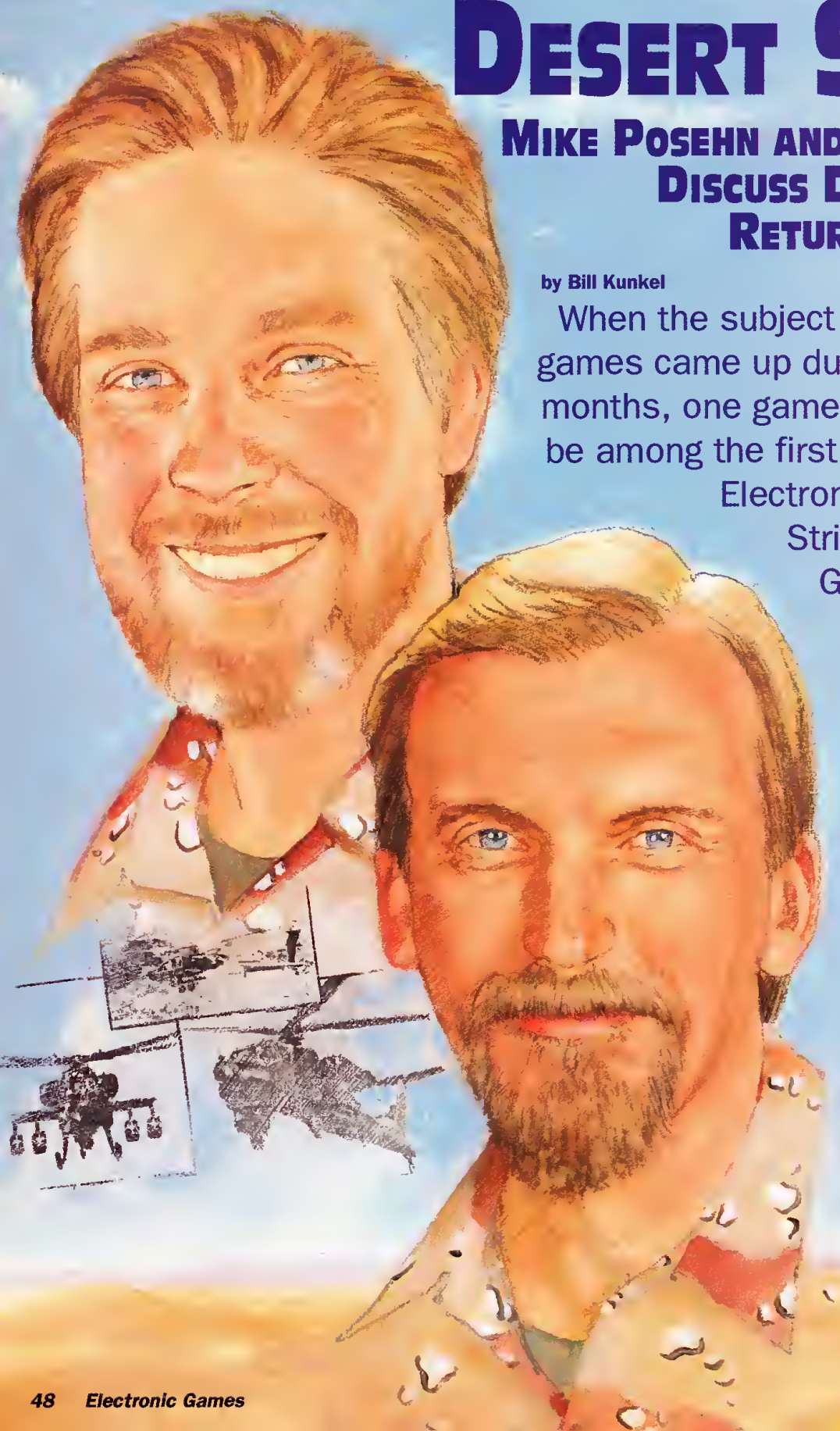
EG INTERVIEW

Meet The Force Behind Desert Strike

Mike Posehn and John Manley Discuss Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf

by Bill Kunkel

When the subject of hot Genesis games came up during the past six months, one game that was sure to be among the first mentioned was Electronic Arts' Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf. This incredibly hot action-strategy video game puts the player in command of a modified Apache combat helicopter, seen from a top-down, three-dimensional perspective, and assigns four multi-mission campaigns against an



unnamed Middle Eastern nation under the rule of a similarly anonymous "Madman" ruler.

But the most interesting thing about Desert Strike is that Mike Posehn and John Manley developed it before the recent Gulf War!



Desert Strike offers revolutionary graphics and intense game play.

"The day that that war broke out," recalled co-designer Manley, "everyone here at EA was watching CNN, and what was interesting was that so much of what we wrote was done before the war started! We had an original version in February, before the war broke out the following January, and we had another version by June. We had chemical weapon plants which had to be destroyed! We had you saving a TV news crew stranded in a war-torn downtown hotel and bring them to the TV station! We had the Apache shutting down a spigot as oil spilled into the Gulf! And there's Bernard Kalb, sitting on his hotel roof on TV and I'm going: 'I can't believe this!'

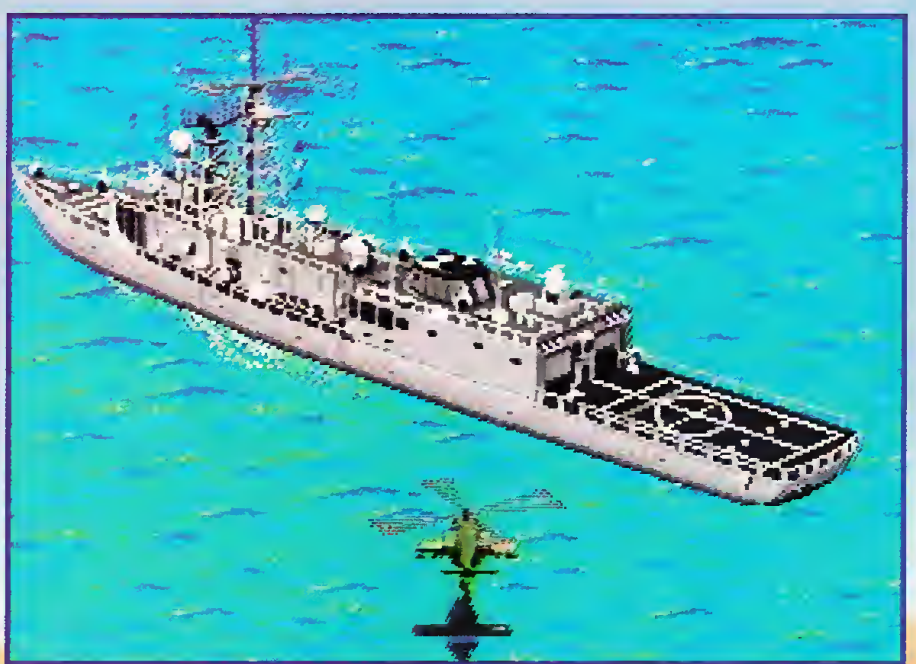
"From then on, we sort of played along with reality. Instead of just blowing up the airport, it became [a question of] establishing air superiority, then taking out the chemical plants and stopping the flow of oil into the Gulf. But so much of this was done before the war even broke out. It was pretty uncanny."

Manley, who worked his way up through the Electronic Arts organization, was the producer on Mike Posehn's (pronounced Poe-sane') DeluxeVideo III for EA, and was recruited to help out on the design of Desert Strike, which was Mike's first video game. The initial inspiration, however, came from the original producer, Tom Casey. Casey, who was later replaced by Richard Robbins, was a big fan of Choplifter, the old Broderbund side scroller in which players piloted a combat/rescue helicopter, picking up survivors while attempting to elude or destroy ground fire. He felt a '90s version of the helicopter rescue theme would do well.

Enter Mike Posehn, a 45-year-old designer-programmer with an impressive pedigree that includes a Ph.D. from Berkeley and a stint at the world-renowned Lawrence Livermore Labs. Mike's previous experience in software design was exclusively in Electronic Arts productivity and creativity programs such as Get Organized, DeluxeVideo and DeluxeVideo III, but his strong interest in state-of-the-art military hardware led EA to offer him its nascent helicopter rescue game. Mike then devised the terrain construction system, flight dynamics and the basic game engine while John Manley wrote and laid out the various campaigns and missions.

"The game was originally going to be called Beirut Breakout," John Manley explained, "and it was designed to [have scenarios] in different parts of the world. For example, you might be fighting a Panamanian drug lord in one mission, then rescuing Marines from Beirut, [and so on]. We decided to keep it in the desert for two reasons. One, it was more topical, and two, it was a lot more economical in the video game sense than trying to create six or seven different worlds."

Among Desert Strike's most talked-about features are the eye-popping Apache helicopter and the unique momentum-style piloting interface. Although the developers admit that a real Apache doesn't have a drop ladder for picking up passengers, the game's helicopter is otherwise quite realistic, down to the type and number of rounds of ammunition. The ship itself was ray-drawn, a sophisticated method of reproducing objects, from a model built by Joe Sparks. The ray-drawn technology simulates the exact manner in which light reflects off the surface of the ship's canopy. "We wanted to have a very realistic-looking helicopter," says Posehn. "Joe Sparks built a really nice model which we shrunk way, way down."



The momentum flying system allows users to turn the chopper clockwise or counter-clockwise by pressing the right or left side of the direction pad, while forward and backward movement is accomplished by pressing the top or bottom of the pad. The ship has actual momentum, however, and will build up speed as it moves in any one direction and, at high speed, may not exactly stop on a dime. Mike spent long hours working on the physics in order to perfectly simulate the movement of his chopper.

The big question lurking around the edges of the interview, of course, was whether or not a sequel was in the works — and if the creators were at liberty to discuss it. Fortunately, the answer to both questions was a resounding positive.

"We're currently working on Desert Strike 2," John reported. "We have a script and we're starting to build our worlds. We're trying to take it a step further; Mike's found a more efficient way to run his terrain maker, so we're going to have [up to] seven different looks in this game. We're going to have you in water, in the jungle, and on a night mission where you have to shoot flares to see where you're going. We're even looking at possibly doing a snow-covered mountain attack. We want it so that if you knock out a tank, the crew members will run out of it and you've got to capture the tank commander. We're taking the engine a step further, and we're giving you a different helicopter that's bigger and stronger and faster."

After spending approximately two years fine tuning the engine that propels Desert Strike, Mike is anxious to maximize its potential, envisioning a wide range of games that would be playable within its parameters. It doesn't take much imagination, after all, to envision this system as the basis for anything from a tank warfare scenario to the video game equivalent of a Japanese monster movie, with giant dinosaurs coming ashore, prepared to do battle with an anti-monster armored SWAT team.

The proposed shipping date for Desert Strike 2, meanwhile, is during the March to May '93 time period. In the meantime, John Manley agreed to share a couple of hints on the first game. The extra life in the third campaign, for example, can be found in the sand dunes: "in the lower right, or southeast corner of the world, there are five sand dunes. The dune in the upper-left corner of that grouping contains an extra life. It's guarded by an Aphid rocket launcher, but it's the only extra life on that level, so you're probably going to need it." And speaking of extra lives, he even offered a code that provides the player with ten lives: "BQQQAEZ". Finally, "TOKTBHI" provides access to the fourth and final campaign.

So, while Mike, John and the rest of the EA team labor to create Desert Strike 2, our readers are free to have some more Madman massacring fun with the first one! Thanks, guys.

Cast and Crew

The complete credits for Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf include Mike Posehn and John Manley (Design); Mike Posehn (Programming); Richard Robbins (Producer); Paul Vernon (Art); Gary Martin, Amy Hennig (Additional Art); Joe Sparks (Apache 3-D Model); Tim Calvin (Additional 3-D models); Rob Hubbard, Brian Schmidt (Sound and Music); Michael Lubuguin (Production Assistant); Carl Mey (Technical Director); T.S. Flanagan (Script and Documentation); Chip Lange (Product Manager); E.J. Sarraille (Package Design); Keith Birdsong (Package Illustration); Jeff Glazier, Randy Delucchi (Product Testing); Brent Allard (Product Mastering); Kevin Hogan, Tim LeTourneau (Quality Assurance); Jennie Maruyama (Documentation Layout); Mike Farrar (Documentation Illustrations); and Special Thanks to Tom Casey, Paul Grace, Susan Manley and Cindy Posehn.





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CIRCLE #164 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Multimedia:

By Joyce Worley

One word is murmured in every smokey backroom, in every secret planning session, in every gaming company strategic summit. It's on the tongues of programmers, designers, artists, and sound experts. It's on the mind of every corporate officer. That word is: multimedia, as the electronic gaming industry looks ahead, the multimedia revolution dominates the future.

Multimedia is behind most corporate decisions these days. It certainly is the cause of the current move toward consolidation. Every talented person in the industry wants to work in this exciting new medium, but it takes big bucks to finance each project. The cost of a multimedia game



CDTV is basically, an Amiga set to run off of just the CD-ROM unit.

can be as much as ten times the budget of a top-of-the-line PC game Facing development costs of a million dollars and more for multimedia releases, independent development houses are glad to cooperate with larger, more financially sound companies.

What Is It—A Dictionary of Terms

Multimedia is interactive optical technology. It combines words, sound, and visuals. It can take the form of any of the following:

CD-ROM PC is a peripheral device that connects to a personal computer and provides text, audio, graphics, still and motion photographs, all stored on a compact disc. CD-ROM devices are available for most computers, including IBM, Macintosh and Amiga.

Videogame CD units are already available from the major videogame hardware manufacturers. There are CD devices either on the market, or in development, from Sega, Nintendo, and Turbo Technologies.

CD-ROM XA extends CD-ROM technology, and providing, greater audio-visual capability.

Black Box describes an "appliance CD," meaning a single component unit with no keyboard, that plugs into a TV or a monitor (or has its own self-contained monitor) and requires no complicated instructions to use or install.

CD-I is a standalone system (not connected to a computer) which attaches to television and stereo, and provides multimedia on a compact disc. It was designed by Philips.

CDTV is a CD-ROM stand-alone system from Commodore. It has an internal Amiga computer, and hooks up to the TV and stereo.

What Does It Mean To Me?

What's the big deal, you may say? CD-ROM is, after all, just an elaborate storage device. What does it offer to make you spend big bucks for new equipment?



Philips CD-I is similar to the CDTV, but doesn't offer the expansion.

Ah, but what a storage device! A CD can hold over 500 floppy discs' worth of data. Fancy animations and gigantic gaming environments, enhanced by clear sound and speech, take vast memory resources which the CD provides.

Thanks to CD's huge capacity, the programs can be much more complex, more in depth than before possible. Designers are just beginning to utilize this potential.

What Is Available Now?

There are currently three kinds of multimedia entertainment. First are games that previously existed in computer format, and have simply been moved to CD storage devices. Occasionally, the CD will hold a collection of games previously sold separately.

Will The Black Box Break Through?

These are often the same as their computer versions, but the best have enhancements: fancier graphics, added sound and music scores, and even added scenarios.

Next are encylopedic programs, containing databanks of information on featured subjects, complete with music and graphics.One CD-ROM can contain an entire reference library of a favorite topic, cross-indexed with search-and-find routines to make research a joy. There are many discs of historical data, travelogues, photographic collections, dictionaries, and other useful information. These are great educational aids, as well as treasure troves for hobbyists.

Finally, there are programs developed specifically for this exciting new



Consumers will soon be able to connect the Turbo Duo to their PCs.

medium. These range from illustrated storybooks with music and speech to complex interative adventures. Only a few such masterpieces are on the market now, but dozens more are in development, scheduled to hit retail shelves soon.

CD-ROM For Computer

CD-ROM peripherals for computers are not "black boxes". More complicated to install, they can deliver top-quality sound and visuals. They mate with computer, disc drive, keyboard, monitor, and sometimes sound boards, to provide the storage capacity for giant programs. The current multimedia standard calls for at least a 386SX personal computer with Windows and a color monitor.

There is a vast library available for computer CD-ROM. Meckler's resource publication, *CD ROM In Print* (available in print and on CD disc), lists over 3000 titles, and dozens, perhaps hundreds, more have been released since that compilation.

The level of excellence in the top programs is unparalleled. LucasArts, Software Toolworks, Virgin Games, Origin, Paragon, and most of the other top game companies have released, or are readying, CD ROM entertainments. They are just part of the flood of product coming from such giant corporations as Comptons, Warner New Media, National Geographic, Grolier, Time, Britannica, and too many others to mention.

Commodore's CDTV: An All-Family Resource

Commodore introduced the CDTV in the US early in 1991, making it the first "black box" interactive multimedia product for the home. The unit



This fall, Sega will release a CD attachment for the Genesis.

connects to a TV and a stereo system, then accepts discs much like a standard audio CD player. A remote control completes the package, and allows interaction with the software.

Commodore has recently completed a line of accessory products, including a keyboard, mouse, disc drive, trackball controller, and memory cards. A special enhancement pack, containing keyboard, mouse,



MULITIMEDIA:
Will The Black Box Break Through?

disc drive and Amiga operating system, expands the CDTV to an Amiga computer.

Commodore envisions the CDTV as a family resource, and its software lineup reflects this attitude. Almost 100 titles are currently available. There's a large number of references, including atlases, dictionaries, encyclopedias, *The Bible*, Sherlock Holmes, business, politics, arts and science, most prices ranging



Mystic Midway is just one of the games being offered for Philips CD-I.

from $50 to $80. The large Grolier *Encyclopedia* which, along with the game **Lemmings** is included with the machine, retails for $395 if sold separately. Educational titles range from $40 for child-ware, to $50-60 for more complex tutorials. Music, Arts & Leisure software cover a wide variety of special interests, from gardening to golf, to karaoke. A large library of entertainment products include many well-known computer games, such as **Falcon**, **Battle Chess**, **Secret of Monkey Island**, **Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective**, **Indiana Jones & The Last Crusade**, **Sim City**, and many more. Most game prices range from $40-$70.

CDTV's suggested list price is $999; the Amiga upgrade kit, $250.

CD-I: A Varied Program

The Philips Compact Disc Interactive system (CD-I) looks very much like an audio CD player, and connects to a TV and a stereo system to provide multimedia. Programs are stored on 5 inch CD-I discs, and a thumbstick controls the action. Adult and child-sized roller controllers are also available, sold separately.

The company used live actors for the full-motion action sequences in **Mystic Midway**, an arcade-style shooting game now in development, featuring Dr. Dearth, a wise-cracking host who insults the player throughout the game. Live actors were also hired to work on **Lords of the Rising Sun**, a Shogun strategy story with battling Ninjas, and an oriental princess who sets up the action.

CD-I offers a varied program of entertainment. There are almost 100 programs listed in the catalog, either available now or this winter, including about a dozen music discs that feature facts and trivia in addition to the soundtracks. Selections include classical compilations, jukeboxes, blues, jazz and others, priced from $15 to $20. Over 30 programs for kids,are available now or soon.

Sesame Street, Richard Scarry, cartoons, Mother Goose, fairy tales, Bible stories, *Aesop's Fables*, and paint boxes range from $20 to $40.

Over 25 disks feature reference materials. These include compilations about the Smithsonian, photography, atlases, collectibles, art collections, hobbies (such as gardening, stamps, coins, birds), and useful programs such as guitar instructions, astrology, and others. Prices on these range from $40 to $70.



The Turbo Duo plays the all new Super CD games like Dragon Slayer.

A couple of dozen entertainment titles round out the selection. Many of these are classics, such as backgammon, chess, and battleship, but there's also **Caesars World of Gambling**, with blackjack, craps, poker, slots and roulette, and **Jigsaw** with over 3000 puzzles. **Defender of the Crown**, **Pinball**, **Dark Castle**, **Escape From Cybercity**, **Deja Vu**, and **Uninvited** promise plenty of thrills for the CD-I gamer. These range in price from $30 to $50.

Video games On CD

Video-gamers don't have to feel left out of the CD-explosion. Turbo Technologies introduced their second CD machine this year; Sega should have theirs on the market by the holiday buying season, and the mighty

Nintendo has announced the development of a 32-Bit CD for the SNES.

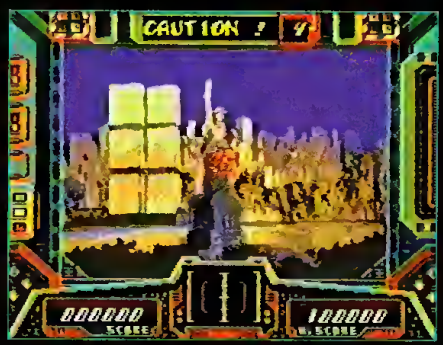
NEC started the video CD boom with the CD add-on unit for the TurboGrafx-16. This year Turbo Technologies (the company that took over the marketing of NEC's game system) introduced the Turbo Duo, a combo unit. The left side of the machine plays regular TurboChip games (so the TG-16 games can be used), and the right side has a CD-ROM player which will play TurboGrafx-CDs, as well as the new Super CD games. There's also an adapter, sold separately, which allows the Turbo Duo to be attached to a personal computer.

The second-generation game system has four times the memory of the first TurboGrafx-CD. There should be between 5 and 10 new Super CD titles available this winter, as well as the TurboChip and TG-16 games that also work on the Duo. The system retails for $299.99, and comes bundled with five games: Bonk's Adventure, Bonk's Revenge, Gate of Thunder (the first Super CD game), Ys I and II, and Dungeon Explorer.

There are over a dozen Super CDs scheduled for winter release, including Shadow of the Beast, Prince of Persia, Loom, and Sim Earth. There are also a half dozen or so more new CD disks, including an educational title, Lords of the Rising Sun, Cosmic Fantasy II, and others.

Little information is available yet, about the Sega CD, scheduled for pre-Christmas rollout.

The Sega CD multimedia system, for the Genesis is said to double the Genesis' processing power. It connects to the Genesis, and can also be attached to a stereo to heighten the sound effects and music. The company promises "Hollywood-quality animation", and there should be



Sega CD will feature arcade classics like Cobra Command.

20 Sega CD titles ready at time of the system's launch, with that many more available by Spring 1993. Many top-level games will be available, such as CD versions of **Sonic The Hedgehog**, **Batman**, **Streets of Rage**, **King's Quest V**, **Monkey Island**, **Willy Beamish**, **Wolf Child**, **Cobra Command, Ultima Underworld**, and **Wing Commander**.

Sega has established a multimedia studio to develop CD-ROM games for the new machine, employing designers, artists, musicians, and producers. It takes well over a year to create a Sega CD game, and there are currently over 40 people on the team. Some of the facilities include an audio studio with isolation booth for voice-overs, a "Blue Screen" for filming action shots to be digitized, and a staff of both freehand and computer artists.

Things To Come

Nintendo announced, well over a year ago, that a CD-ROM unit is currently under development by that company, for use with the Super NES. The projected release date of the new technology is "sometime in 1993." According to Bill White, Director of Marketing for Nintendo, the company is "striving to achieve full-motion, full-screen display at 30 frames per second, the speed at which VCR tapes move." Nintendo is hoping to retail the machine for under $200. When the gamer inserts a CD disk into the CD-ROM player, a cart is also inserted into the slot of the Super NES. This cart is actually a 32-Bit co-processor that enhances the capability of the Super NES, so that the CD-ROM game experience will be richer than possible without the combined smarts of both units. This may even be the first 32-Bit game machine released.

Sony is set to introduce its own device this winter. Advance word on this black box indicates that it will be a high-level, state-of-the-art portable unit that contains its own LCD display panel. It includes a CD-ROM XA drive, 16-bit PC compatible microprocessor, MS-DOS operating system, speaker, keyboard and cursor pad. Like the other stand-alone units, it is designed for ease of use.

CD-ROM is an exciting medium that holds promise of dominating the 90's.It does not supplant video game or computer technology, but it is an important adjunct that gets rid of the memory limitations that have shackled game creators since the advent of our hobby.



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Super Star Wars

Lucasfilm/JVC
SNES
1 Player

Just over 15 years ago a motion picture debuted with a new angle on a familiar Hollywood theme. By fusing outer space adventure with a good dose of implied realism, an ingredient not normally found in sci-if flicks, *Star Wars* captured the world's imagination by delivering its galaxy-sized dreams in a one-of-a-kind package. Enough people were drawn to the exciting situations, identifiable characters and mystical magic of *Star Wars* to not only make it the number one movie of its day, but also prompt an endless stream of clones (most of them bad) as well as two successful sequels.

The SNES translation of the *Star Wars* universe has been produced with the same attention to detail and quest for adventure that made the movie as popular and innovative as it proved to be.

Initially cast in the role of Luke Skywalker, the player follows the movie's plot line, guiding the hero and Jedi-wanna-be across the dunes of his home planet of Tatooine. The action here is particularly two-dimensional. There's the conventional side-scrolling motif that has been mishandled by so many video games over the past few years. But this is also where the game takes its first departure from the norm. Unlike the scores of mediocre titles that preceded it, **Super Star Wars**, judged from the first level alone, is something special.

From graphics detail to the smooth and easy interaction between player and on-screen alter ego, **Super Star Wars** reproduces the familiar adventure in an exciting interactive format, and it only gets better from here.

Once through the brilliantly drawn landscapes of the first level, the game makes its second departure from the typical blast-and-slash crowd. The entire play mechanics of **Super Star Wars** change after blasting the Boss that stands between the player and subsequent levels of play.

The second level boasts a visual perspective similar to the race game **F-Zero**. The gamer must guide Luke and C-3PO across the dune sea, blasting a designated number of pesky jawas while using the landspeeder's jets to fly towards the enormous sandcrawler lying in wait across the horizon. Although the lack of real scaling is somewhat of a letdown, the entire level, from look to feel, is executed with surprising-ly good flair.

The game stays in tempo with the the movie, adding new adventures within the sandcrawler. This scene typifies one of the few problems. While Luke's storming of the jawa high-rise is filled with the highest quality graphics and play, the game, while long on looks, isn't particularly challenging, even on the harder settings. It's also apparent that the programmers must have become aware of this. Although this round isn't difficult, the player will spend a fair amount of time (like all **Super Star Wars** levels, this one is long) successfully making the jumps from platform to platform, only to catch a stray bullet at the very top of the



Super Star Wars is a triumph! There has never been a video game that has so closely duplicated the feel of the movie from which it was transferred.

sandcrawler and fall to the bottom of the corsair and the beginning of the round. It quickly becomes frustrating.

The frustration of the game's all-or-nothing attitude continues into the second half of the sandcrawler segment. New techniques must be employed here (the slide and scoot borrowed from **Mega Man**) to avoid a misstep at the conclusion of the level. Throughout most of the game a false move puts the player on top of an enemy or hazardous obstacle, or subtracts energy from the inventory. In the bowels of the jawa transport, however, the rules change. An unsuccessful jump across the vats of lava in the bottom of the ship's core brings instant death.



All of the scenes from the movie are intact, with extra action added.

It's hard not to marvel at the scope and production of this game. As you continue to switch between side-scrolling action sequences and the wonderfully attractive Mode 7 landspeeder and X-Wing scenes, the *Star Wars* storyline continues right up to the final, fateful destruction of the Empire's deadly Death Star.

Throw in a good number of animated intermissions, the ability to switch from character to character (each boasting their own strengths and weaknesses), as well as different weapons ranging from the lightsaber to good old-fashioned blasters, and you end with a game that bucks the trend and delivers more than just a great name - it presents a great game as well.

Super Star Wars represents the best action-adventure that the SNES has to offer. It's a long adventure with a good variety of sequences. Like to the movie it's based on, it is worth the price of admission.

— Shey Stevens

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	91%
Sound	87%
Playability	71%
OVERALL	84%

Mohammed Ali Boxing

Virgin
Genesis
1 Player

Boxing games are pretty commonplace in the video game universe, but boxing simulations are extremely rare. Pugilism has been presented from top-down, side and even first-person perspectives, but one of the most elemental components of the sport has rarely been reproduced: ring generalship. The ability to exploit, rather than be imprisoned by the confines of the squared circle is also rare, but if one boxer possessed this skill, it was Mohammed Ali. It is appropriate, therefore, that Park Place's **Mohammed Ali Boxing** makes the best use yet of the ring's strategic implications in a video game.

The unique graphics view the in-ring action from an elevated three-quarters perspective, with one of the corners angled toward the gamer, as if seeing the action from a seat about ten rows up from ringside and slightly off to the side. The combatants move freely about the ring, and, with skill, must learn how to backpedal when in trouble, trap an opponent against the turnbuckles and even execute Ali's famous Rope-a-Dope strategy, in which he would lay against the ropes, ducking his opponent's blows until his foe was punched out.



For anyone who has wanted to fight The Greatest, here is their chance.

The gamer is cast as Ali, who must work his way through a gauntlet of pretenders and contenders on his way to a battle with the current champ, who resembles a weird hybrid of Mike Tyson and Darth Vader. Punches can be thrown to the head or body and Ali can also elude head shots and cover up against body blows. The player selects the number of rounds, and damage and stamina are measured on a bar gauge.

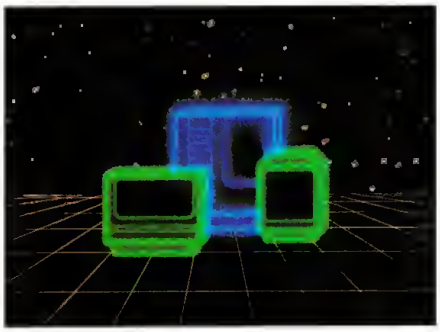
The graphics are superb, as are the fight animations, but the sound effects could use some sharpening. However, the different sounds generated by solid punches, or glancing blows, do provide a nice auditory touch.

Boxing is a brutal sport, and while **Mohammed Ali Boxing** doesn't shy away from that brutality, it doesn't revel in it either. We do see reproductions of both fighters' faces as a damage indicator, however, and this visual element may disturb some players. Also, from a strategic point of view, it places too much emphasis on facial damage and punches to the head, whereas most fights are won through a body attack. Remember the old saying: "Kill the body and the head will die."

Overall, **Mohammed Ali Boxing** is a satisfying simulation with special appeal to boxing fans.

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	86%
Sound	82%
Playability	93%
OVERALL	87%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Wordtris

Spectrum HoloByte
SNES
1-4 Players

Wordtris for the Super NES is the newest member of the popular **Tetris** family. The player still contends with falling tiles, each labeled with a letter, which must be formed into words in order for them to be eliminated. It has four levels difficulty (children's, novice, advanced, and expert), each with its own minimum letter requirements and scoring. The primary difference between the children's and novice levels is that the tiles drop slower in the less advanced scenario.



Wordtris is an addictive game for puzzle lovers. Bad spellers beware!

There are also four different game modes: single player; competitive (two players simultaneously in competition), cooperative (two players cooperating), and tournament, where up to four players test their skill on the same games in rotation.

The Super NES version of **Wordtris** offers ten levels of play (A-J), with the tiles falling faster on each level, and an increased opportunity to eliminate poorly placed tiles. The first method of removal is a cherry bomb, which will blow up any one tile it lands on. This piece appears randomly on all levels. The second is a stick of dynamite, which destroys the tile it hits, the tile beneath it, and one tile each to the right and to the left. The dynamite appears on levels E through J. The last is an acid beaker, which disintegrates an entire column of tiles, but only after the player has formed a word of six or more letters. **Wordtris** also provides a wild card tile, which the player converts into a useful letter by using the A or B buttons as the tile descends.

If this is the first opportunity gamers have to play **Wordtris**, this version is a definite winner. Even if players have the computer versions of **Wordtris**, the Super NES version is a valuable addition to any collection of game carts. The primary difference between the earlier computer version and this SNES conversion is the falling speed of the tiles. To give the game what the developers must have felt was a more video game-like slant, both speed of descent and opportunities to eliminate letters have been increased.

Wordtris is an exciting challenge for Tris game lovers. It introduces a new level of strategy with the use of alphabet tiles.

—Laurie Yates

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	93%
Playability	91%
OVERALL	88%

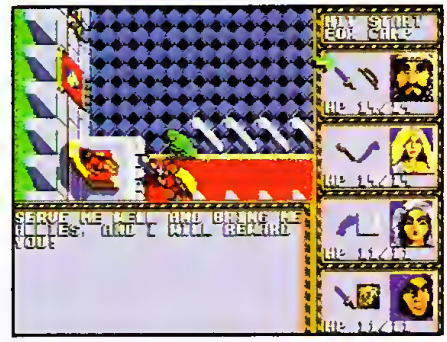
AD&D: Warriors of the Eternal Sun

Sega
Genesis
1 player

In the middle of fighting a ferocious war against the goblins, the fair kingdom falls victim to some sort of black magic. Lightning and thunder surround the kingdom, and the castle and everyone in it is transported to a distant valley. High cliffs close off the area from the outside world, and the goblins are expected to take advantage of this situation and destroy the kingdom once and for all.

A party of warriors bands together to go forth and investigate this new land. Maybe, if some powerful allies can be found, the kingdom can repel the goblin threat and survive.

Warriors of the Eternal Sun is the first licensed Advanced Dungeons and Dragons game programmed for the Genesis. SSI, the company responsible for the computer AD&D series, also programmed this game. All of the AD&D rules are intact, as well as the licensed monsters and playing interface. The party of four can be created from scratch, or players can use the pre-assembled group. Attributes are rolled for; re-rolling is possible if one is not pleased. Those familiar with the old pen and paper role-playing games, or SSI's computer games, will feel right at home with the interface.



Sega brings role-playing to a new level with their first AD&D title.

Anyone used to the **Phantasy Star** type of role-playing game will find that **Warriors** makes those look like child's play. The quest is difficult, and novices die often. The route is not clearly mapped (even in the hint book), making patience and exploration skills a must. At times the game is frustrating, even just figuring out where to go next. However, those with the necessary patience will find hours of rewarding adventure inside the little black case.

At first glance, the fact that this is an American game instead of a Japanese conversion is apparent.

The Lemmings are coming.

LEMMINGS™

ARE HERE!



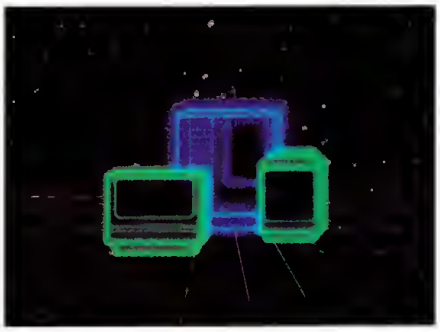
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

LICENSED BY Nintendo

PSYGNOSIS

SUNSOFT SUNSOFT SUNSOFT SUNSOFT SUNSOFT

Lemmings™ is a trademark of PSYGNOSIS LIMITED. © 1991 PSYGNOSIS LIMITED © 1991 Nintendo of America Inc. © 1991 Sun Corporation of America



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

The feel is different from games coming out from the far east. Its major weaknesses are the battle scenes and the length of time it takes to build up powers. In battle scenes, characters tend to blend into the background and it is difficult to pinpoint their locations to plan strategy. The other combat problem



Due to the perspective, combat is confusing in the dungeon mode.

occurs in the underground sequences. By deviating from the "everyone gets a turn" philosophy of most video game RPGs, the fast and furious pace when trying to kill enemies can be confusing. For the sequel, perhaps they should switch to an overhead view during all combat sequences.

Mapping is an absolute necessity, as the automap does not save once the party is out of the cavern. If players leave and then return, automapping starts from the beginning.

Warriors of the Eternal Sun is an excellent first combined effort from Sega and SSI. We can only hope that Sega goes on with this series and continues to produce games with a higher degree of difficulty and more mature game play.

— Marc Camron

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	79%
Sound	75%
Playability	75%
OVERALL	78%

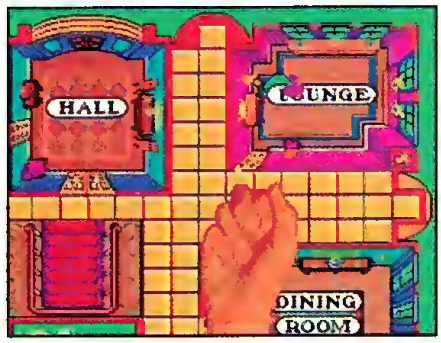
Clue

Parker Brothers
Genesis
Multi-player

The happy gang of weapon-toting suspects who held sway over armchair detectives for several decades in Parker Brothers' classic board game, **Clue**, have now arrived in the 16-Bit video game universe. Miss Scarlet is now Ms. Scarlet, but the rest of the crew—Mrs. White, Col. Mustard, Prof. Plum, Mrs. Peacock and Mr. Green—have hardly changed in all these years.

This is an electronic board game, playable by three to six players, with any number of those players either human or computer controlled. There are five levels of difficulty, a demo mode, and all the familiar, Victorian locations, from the kitchen to the conservatory. The computer controlled gamers play a solid, if predictable, game.

The Genesis version of **Clue** is an extremely literal translation, with the presence of computer-controlled players being the primary difference between it and its non-electronic predecessor. At long last, **Clue** fans will be able to play the game alone!



Clue is another in the line of board games presented by Parker Bros.

During each turn, players have the option of rolling the dice, interrogating a suspect, making an accusation or looking at their cards. Through a process of elimination, the winner must successfully deduce who committed each murder, where they did it, and what weapon they used.

The graphics are pretty much what you'd expect: the game board comprises approximately nine screens, with markers, digitized game cards and all the other familiar **Clue** trappings. After each accusation, the result is played out as if on a stage in appropriate Victorian fashion.

Clue fans should be very happy with this faithful adaptation and its collection of tireless, computer opponents. In short, devotees of the original **Clue** are likely candidates to enjoy this new, plugged-in version as well. Now, we can only hope for a version of **Clue: Master Detective.**

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	80%
Sound	78%
Playability	82%
OVERALL	81%

AXELAY

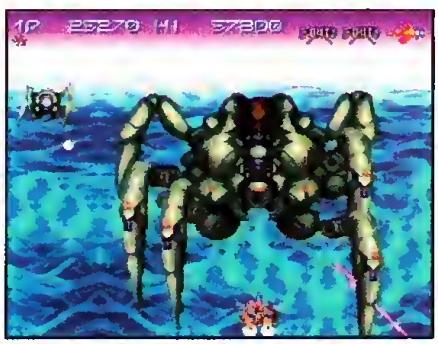
Konami
SNES
1 Player

A peaceful planet has been totally devastated by an onslaught of merciless alien warships. The player assumes the role of one of the few survivors of an elite force of starfighters chosen to take on the alien armada before it returns to finish what it started. This starfighter will pilot an experimental starship dubbed "Axelay" and go alone on a mission to destroy the aliens in their own territory.

The storyline isn't exactly original, but the rest of the game breaks all ties with previous shooting games. **Axelay** takes on a new pseudo

three-dimensional perspective unlike anything seen before. The effect is so well done that it has to be seen to be believed. The use of Mode 7 is evident in almost all levels of the game. The side scrolling levels are also very intense and feature some interesting concepts. Some of the boss characters, also manipulated through Mode 7, fill up the entire screen. Graphically this is one of the most impressive carts to date for the Super NES!

The background music is well-orchestrated and features a variety of instruments and effects. Sound effects are also excellent; explosions really pack a punch when played through a decent sound system. There are even excellent digitized voices in the weapon selection screen.



Axelay offers incredible graphics and a new perspective for shooters.

Game play is set up like most conventional shoot-em-ups and it is possible to reconfigure the controller to your playing preference. At the beginning of each stage, three advanced weapons systems may be selected from the arsenal. New systems are earned each time a level is completed. There are eight weapons in all, and strategy is required when choosing what will aid most in the next level. Choosing the wrong weapon may lead into a dead-end situation. The Round Vulcan is especially notable because its cannons can rotate 360°. The game is only six levels long and seems to end quickly.

Axelay is such a unique, visually stunning shooter that, though it's short, this cart is too sweet to miss.

— Martin Alessi

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	95%
Sound	93%
Playability	89%
OVERALL	92%

Super Buster Brothers

Capcom
SNES
1-2 players

Super Buster Brothers is a translation of Capcom's arcade hit. The character must run around the bottom of the screen, shooting his cable gun up at bouncing bubbles. When a bubble touches the cable or the hook on the end, it pops and splits into smaller bubbles, each of which must be popped until there are none left on the screen. Occasionally, an extra power up item will fall from the bubbles or from the breakable bricks. Some, like the stop clock or the laser gun, make it easier to clear the screen, but others, in particular the dynamite, break up the bigger bubbles and increase the already frantic pace of the game.

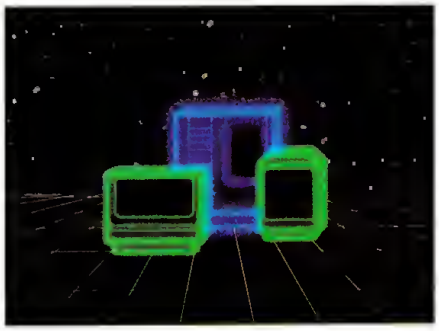
Each screen is different, with ladders, platforms and bricks (some breakable) placed as obstructions. There are also creatures who will come out to either help or hurt, depending on where the balls are. Various monsters break, eat, and carry off the bubbles, and it can be a real pain when a really big bubble gets broken before the player is ready.

Solitaire play is available, as is two player simultaneous action. In the tour mode, the player travels from country to country clearing each screen in turn. There are four difficulty settings. The panic mode is an all-out bubble popping fest. The bubbles come in a never ending stream from the top of the screen. Instead of different lands, the player's level increases with the number of bubbles popped. The higher the level, the faster the action. The only thing that changes on the screen are the backgrounds.

The graphics in **Super Buster Brothers** are good and the painted backgrounds are beautiful. The sounds are solid and gameplay is smooth. Two player mode is fun and challenging.



Capcom brings another of its arcade hits home, with Super Buster Brothers. This game offers an addictive diversion for those tired of Street Fighter II.



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Unfortunately, this game suffers from repetition. Each level is not that much different than the last, and the single screen shooter really went out with space invaders. While there is an initial addictive quality of the game, the action eventually becomes old and with nowhere else to go players will probably shelve their cart for extended periods of time. While **Super Buster Brothers** is not a bad game, it just doesn't stand up to the standards of the '90s.

— Marc Camron

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	72%
Sound	68%
Playability	67%
OVERALL	68%

Magic Sword

Capcom
Super NES
1 Player

Stop me if any of this sounds familiar. Mohun, with his Magic Sword, climbs from floor to floor of the great tower called Drockmar Keep, ever beset by monsters and traps, in search of the Black Orb that holds the Kingdom of Zar in thrall. On his way the hero gathers treasures, armor, coins and keys, magical items including new and more powerful swords, and the occasional ally.

Okay, so the action is nothing new, but the sound and graphics are excellent. Stirring music and the otherwise irrelevant dual-plane scrolling provide a suitably gothic atmosphere, and Mohun struts along with all the elán of any suitably armed and barbarically outfitted muscleheads. The saving grace for this side-scrolling slash-and-blast adventure is the variety and characterization of the allies Mohun can call on to join in his quest (only one at a time, however).



Its always best to bring a friend with you when fighting bosses.

There is the Big Man, whose boomerang axe constantly sweeps the immediate area. The Ninja hurls shurikan stars, and an Amazon fires her crossbow. The Thief tosses bombs (and is also adept at locating hidden treasures), while the Knight, said to be the strongest ally, wields a spear. There is a Cleric who has magical bullets, a Wizard with magic missiles (and a rotating halo of mystical lights), and, if Mohun finds a certain diamond ring, a rough and ready Lizardman is prepared to share his adventure. While the list of companions sounds impressive there is not a great difference between their abilities. The arduous task of fighting the enemies and emerging triumphant falls on the back of Mohn.

Players are treated to the normal round of options. The controller configuration is selectable, as is the level of difficulty. Three difficulty levels are available and a sound test is included on this screen.

But beyond these rather neat elements, the game play is the same old thing. It's been done before, though not necessarily better, and frequently worse.

—Ross Chamberlain

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	86%
Sound	82%
Playability	70%
OVERALL	75%

Bart's Nightmare

Acclaim
SNES
1 player

Sitting at his desk trying to write a paper for school, everyone's favorite Simpson, Bart, falls asleep. Fade to grey... A gust of wind comes up and sweeps Bart's homework out the window and now he must enter dreamland to retrieve it.

Bart's Nightmare brings Acclaim's ongoing series of Simpson games to the Super Nintendo. The graphics have been polished to near cartoon quality. There is an outside street sequence where Bart must avoid obstacles while locating the missing pages of his paper. When he finds one, he jumps into it and enters a



Bartman must smash evil where it dwells to earn one lousy page!

mini game. Get all the way through the mini game and he earns one page of his paper. The more pages he collects, the better his grade and the better ending the player sees.

Objects in the street sequence range from annoying to dangerous. Get hit by too many busses or flying mailboxes and Bart will wake up. Lisa is flying around as a fairy/witch and changes Bart into a frog. Don't despair, there is a lady who will kiss him to change him back. Collectible

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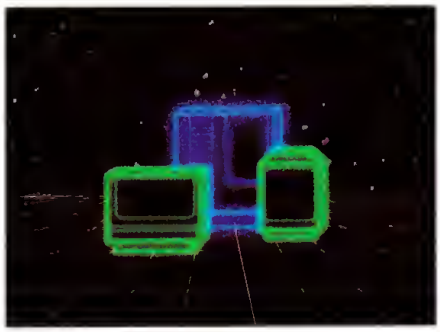




namco

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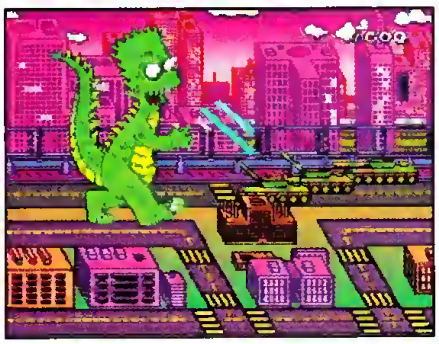


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

objects, bubble gum, watermelon seeds, and soda cans (for super belches) all keep his enemies at bay.

The game really excels in the mini-game sequences. The game is non-linear, giving the player the opportunity to tackle the pages in a random order. When Bart jumps into a page, there are two doors, and behind each, a different game. Bartman, Bartzilla, Indiana Bart, and the hilarious Itchy and Scratchy Show are some of the different sequences.

The Bartman section is a traditional side scrolling shooting game. Bart flies around and pelts his enemies with his handy slingshot. There are five bosses to defeat before Bart can retrieve his page. As Bartzilla, Bart takes the roll of a huge monster, wrecking havoc on a city. With laser beam eyes and fire breath, nothing is safe from destruction. Indiana Bart must jump from pillar to pillar in search of an exit, which gives the sequence a **Q-Bert** feel. He must whip his enemies and avoid any stone that is too low, or he will be plunged into the fiery depths.



When tired of do-gooding, one might choose to rampage as Bartzilla.

The most amusing sequence is the Itchy and Scratchy show. Bart is transported into his favorite cartoon and must use a big blue hammer (and other assorted strange weapons) to fend off Itchy, Scratchy and rampaging household items.

Bart's Nightmare is an excellent action game, and undoubtedly the best of the Simpson games to date. Graphics and sounds are great and the gameplay in most segments is smooth and fluid. There is enough variety and humor to keep gamers coming back for more. **Bart's Nightmare** gives the feeling of playing a cartoon instead of a video game and even those who don't enjoy the TV show will have fun.

— Marc Camron

Correction

In **EG** #1 it was mistakenly reported that Electronic Arts' **NHLPA Hockey** for the Genesis was developed by Park Place. It was, in fact, developed by Jim Simmons, formerly with Park Place. Apologies.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	84%
Playability	84%
OVERALL	86%

Out Of This World

Interplay
SNES
1 Player

Lester Knight is a scientist, one of those guys who would rather be playing with atoms than going out on Saturday night. One day, while working during a violent storm, lightning struck a conduit, and the next thing he knew, Lester was in a strange world, fighting for his life.

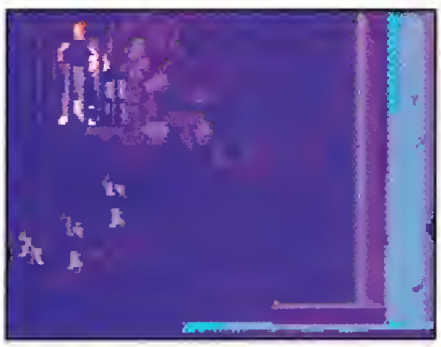
So starts **Out Of This World**, an action game with a completely different look. Companies have used filled polygon graphics on driving and flight simulations for a couple of years.



Now, Interplay has removed them from the simulation sector, and used them to create an action game which more closely resembles an interactive movie.

Originally designed for computers, **Out Of This World** offers fast action, combined with problem solving. The story moves along through the use of cinematic intermissions, and game play is broken down into sections. As players finish each segment, they receive a password so they can restart the game at the next section.

The graphics on the Super NES version are flawless, and the sound is excellent. The only difference between this and the computer version is that the computer version seems to move a bit faster. If the player hasn't become an expert on the computer version, this should not present a problem.



Out Of This Word looks and feels more like a movie than a game.

Game play is similar to **Dragon's Lair**. Every problem has a solution, and when it's figured out, a practiced player will be able to play through each section of the game without thinking twice. This is the game's only real shortcoming. Once the actions are memorized, and the game won, it is easy to walk through it the next time you play. This undoubtedly shortens the life-span of the contest. Still, the challenge is high enough to get quite a few hours of play.

Out Of This World is so unique, players may want to check it out just to get a glimpse at the future of video games. The graphics combine with an interesting story and fun play to make one of the truly great games of the year.

— *Marc Camron*

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	72%
Sound	85%
Playability	75%
OVERALL	78%

NOTE: In the October **EG**, we failed to credit art from **Out Of This World.** Thanks for the use of this outstanding cover art.

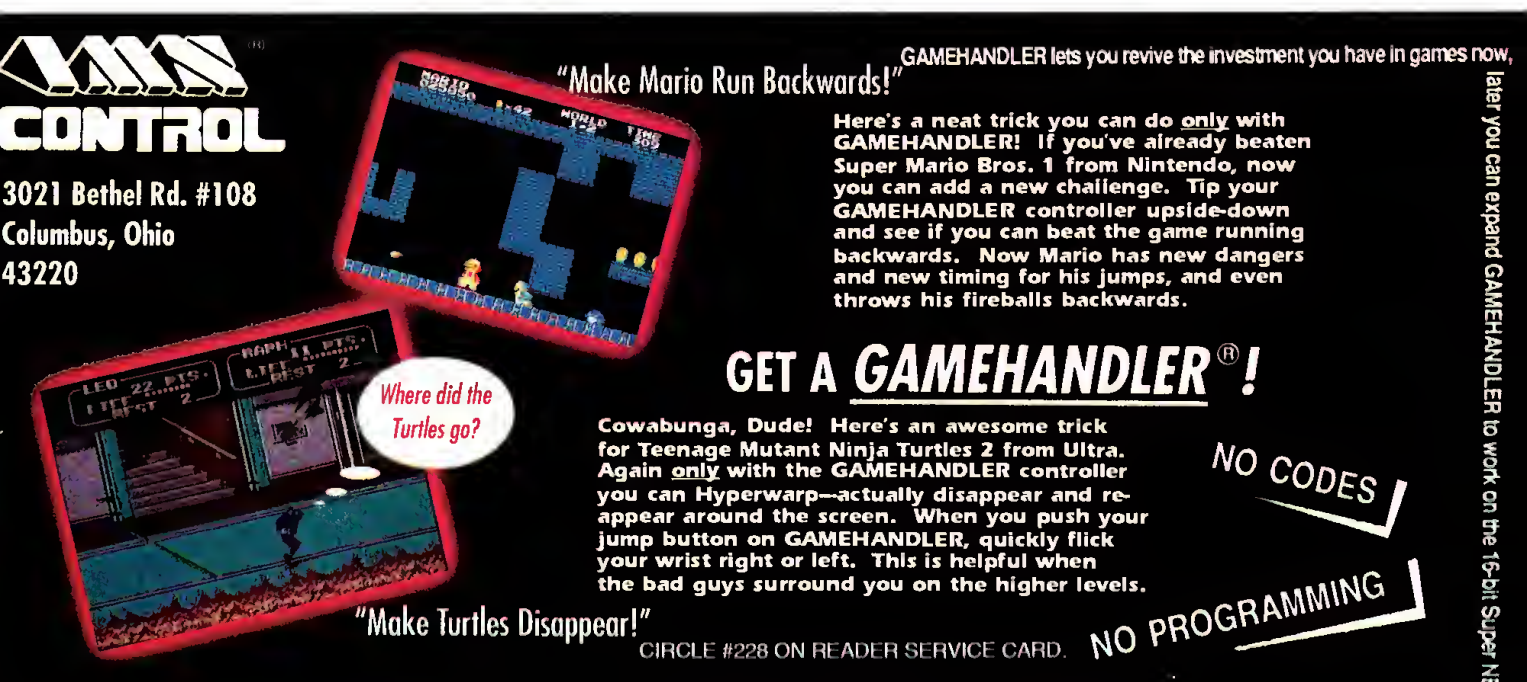
Universal Soldier

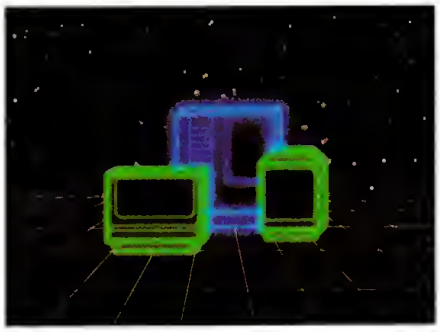
Ballistic
Super-NES
One Player

Universal Soldier is a virtual prototype for everything that's currently wrong with video games taken from movie licenses. The film, a summer smash wannabee that wasn't, starred Jean-Claude Van Damme as Luc Devreux, a soldier killed in Vietnam by his loony sergeant, Andrew Scott, portrayed by the eternally wooden Dolph Lundgren. Scott is also killed somewhere along the line and both men are brought back to life as Universal Soldiers, cyborgs who are to grunts what Robocop is to police officers. At some point, of course, killing machine Van Damme's programming goes awry and his memory returns,



Be careful. For powerful cyborgs, your characters damage easily.





VIDEO GAME GALLERY

at which point Lundgren is sent to terminate him and the two are once again locked in mortal combat.



The bosses in Universal Soldier are big, but lack in graphic detail.

Granted, this is not the most inspired plot of the year, but it deserves better than being translated into Generic Side-Shooter #3,009. This is certainly not the first time we've seen a big bucks movie dropped into the side-scrolling slot — everything from Darkman to The Terminator has been stuffed through that sausage grinder — but familiarity has really begun to breed contempt. It's as if video game publishers spend all their budget and creativity obtaining and hyping the license, with the actual game development treated as an afterthought. This kind of thinking dates all the way back to the days when Atari destroyed years of credibility by producing abysmal 2600 games based on such mega-hits as E.T. and Raiders of the Lost Ark.

Not that **Universal Soldier** is the most offensive example of this trend; just the most recent. The game, developed by The Code Monkeys, begins with player-character Devreux beamed onto the first of 2000 play screens. There, in a sequence right out of **Super Mario World**, Devreux must leap repeatedly into the air and bump his head into a floating platform in order to obtain his startup materials. Then it's scroll, scroll, scroll, blowing up UNISOL trucks, mutant predators and other Universal Soldiers along the way. The graphics are varied but nothing special, with typical bonus weapons, including a laser whip, shurikens and, of course, the Universal Soldier's trusty "megablast super weapon."

Finally, in a film based around a pair of powerful antagonists, why on earth is this a one player game? Universal Soldier may not be the richest source material a development team ever had, but The Code Monkeys didn't even do this generic action flick justice.

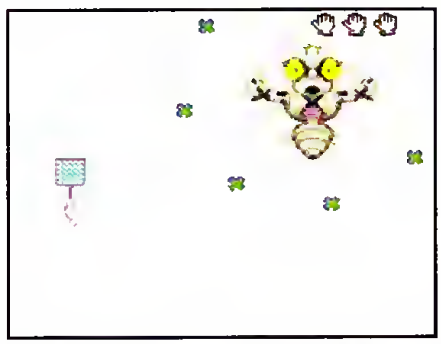
— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	72%
Sound	85%
Playability	75%
OVERALL	78%

Mario Paint and Mouse

Nintendo
SNES
Multiplayer

Most video painting programs are weak in comparison to what many children and adults can do with some paper and pencils. One game has set out to change all that.



Included in Mario Paint is a bug swatting game to teach mouse use.



The coloring book offers creative tools not found in the Crayola box.

Mario Paint features a revolutionary two-buttoned mouse, a feature usually reserved for the computer market. The mouse allows the aspiring artist to create masterpieces which would not be possible with a joypad.

The game begins with an empty canvas. The player can select from a variety of paintbrushes, paints and pattern designs, and an option to color one of four detailed, pre-drawn pictures. Fifteen colors with pattern variations are avalable.

For those who excel at creating music, **Mario Paint** has one of the most versatile and easy-to-use music programs to date. The sounds consist of sixteen icons that create the usual tones of drums, saxophones and guitars. There are also sounds of dogs, cats, pigs and even crying babies. Making the music is a snap; just select an icon from the provided group and place it on the music sheet. Various options include changing the tempo, setting a loop and even pre-recorded music.

Animated cartoons are also a strong reality in the world of **Mario Paint**. In Animation Land, the player begins by selecting the size of the animation from four, six, or nine frames. The more frames of animation there are, the smaller the picture will be.

Once the frames are determined, simply paint, stamp and sketch any form of cartoon character on the frames and slightly alter each one for an animation look. The entire process is extremely simple and even a novice can create high quality cartoons in a matter of minutes. After the cartoon is created, the user

can animate the picture and also include music or sound effects.

When the artist has had enough creativity for awhile, it's time for a coffee break. The coffee icon on the main menu puts players at the controls of a deadly fly-swatter. Simply move the mouse around and swat at the annoying pests. Watch out, though! The bugs get pretty nasty, and the big boss is a cruel mixture of all the previous insects.

Overall, **Mario Paint** is an enjoyable mix of fun and new technology. The mouse has the potential to power a whole new generation of video gaming.

— Danyon Carpenter

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	89%
Playability	92%
OVERALL	91%

On the Ball

Taito
SNES
1-2 Players

Occasionally a game comes along that defies all categories. Whether they're called puzzlers or reflex-testers, games like **Tetris** excel as tests of ourselves. Each presents an ultimate challenge that doesn't pit players against an opponent, but rather tests our own abilities.



Rotate yourself into a frenzy with the addictive puzzler, On the Ball.

On the Ball fits that mold well. This new title from Taito pits the player against himself in a re-working of the Atari Games classic coin-op **Marble Madness**.

Lacking the three-dimensional flair of **Madness**, **On the Ball** takes a decidedly flatter approach by following a falling marble on its trek through a maze of walls, pegs and other obstacles.

Although it doesn't have any real graphics punch, **On the Ball** is filled with nice detail throughout each spiralling level of play. The graphics could just as well be vector line drawings, however, since the animation of walls and other impediments is purely to draw the boundaries. The color shading and vibrant tones are an added bonus.

Unlike **Marble Madness**, where the objective was to maneuver a sphere through a descending maze of mayhem, **On the Ball** makes use of the SNES's advanced features and throws in visual cotton-candy that only its two-dimensional approach would allow. As the icon rolls down the screen, its course is altered by rotating the entire level. To change direction, a spin of the obstacle course leaves a clear path for the ball to roll. It's a completely unique play technique that might make players a little dizzy at first, but provides just the right amount of control to expand the cart's appeal.

The game is packed with a variety of game environments, worlds to conquer in order to advance to the next plateau where all-new mazes await.

Time is the only enemy in **On the Ball**. The clock ticks unmercifully towards zero and the end of the game. Once a round is complete, a time award is presented and play progresses to the next, slightly more difficult, maze.

Although **On the Ball** is great fun, it lacks a little of the addictive edge that allowed **Tetris** to stand up to repeated play. **On the Ball** wears thin more quickly, but nevertheless remains a worthwhile investment.

Gamers may not play it for hours on end, but it's perfect for those afternoons when saving galaxies and blowing away bad guys brings yawns instead of cheers. That's just the time to break out of the normal routine and challenge yourself instead.

— Shey Stevens

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	76%
Sound	74%
Playability	84%
OVERALL	81%

Mick and Mack The Global Gladiators

Virgin
Genesis
1 Player

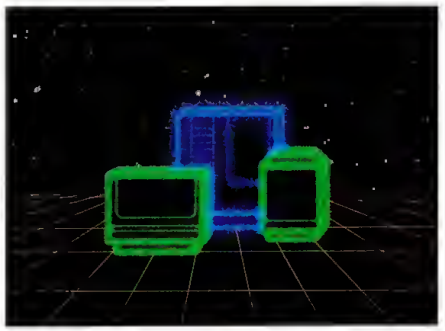
This very cute game from Virgin comes by way of the McDonald's Drive Thru. This latest installment from Virgin turned out to be a lot better than imagined. The player takes the role of Mick and Mack who must go out and rid the lands of evil no-gooders.

The heroes start in the jungle fighting slimy monsters of goo, progress through the forest (filled with spitting squirrels and other assorted oddball characters) and continue through many other zones.



An old burger buddy is there to see you across the finish line of levels.

This game has a clean-up-the-environment feel to it, mixed with good fast paced, side scrolling, shoot'em up action. Graphics are very neat and detailed, leaving no room for dissappointment.



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

The background music is upbeat and blends with the action very well.



The bonus zones give the player the chance to clean things up.

With all the levels and play on varied surfaces, it produces an atmosphere of a very large environment. While traversing through the levels, the player is completely surrounded by a world of strange and bizarre creatures and landscapes.

During the first few minutes of play, gamers may be a little uncomfortable with the controls and the momentum of the character, but after a while they will grow accustomed to it. The jump, shoot and run characteristics are very smooth and liquid which makes for a pleasant environment. There is a little delay within the controls between jumping and firing, but not enough to make it uncomfortable.

This is not a typical side scroller, because it feels and looks so different compared to others. The game is very fun to play, with a new twist that is enjoyable to learn and explore. Players won't even mind the environmental themes. Fast action, fun environment and lots of things to eat.

Way to go, Virgin!

— Franklin Horowitz

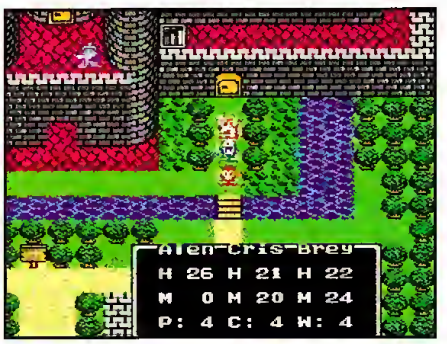
RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	79%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	83%

Dragon Warrior 4

Enix America
NES
1 player

Something is rotten in Burland. It seems there is one of those generic bad guys, running around and creating some generic nastiness. Children are disappearing, and the world is falling apart before everyone's eyes. Of course, this story would not be complete without a generic hero-type, ready to come forth and conquer the ever-present evil.

Yes, **Dragon Warrior 4** comes complete with a very generic plot; however, in execution, this game is anything but. **Dragon Warrior** is unquestionably the most popular series of games in Japan (known as **Dragon's Quest** there). The consumers in the U.S. have not shown quite as much enthusiasm as the game players in Japan, where people camped out in front of stores to get their copies. Yet, these games have definitely held their own.



The popular NES role-playing series continues with Dragon Warrior IV.

This installment in the adventure is a little different from its predecessors. The designers have split it into chapters, with each new chapter introducing a new character to take through a quest. There are four preliminary chapters, culminating in a fifth where the four characters get together for the final quest.

Dragon Warrior 4 is filled with different slants on the theme. In the third chapter, the player is given the opportunity to purchase his own shop. No more having to sell items back for half of what they cost! Get top dollar at your own shop.

The graphics in **Dragon Warrior 4** are marginally better than in previous games, and the sound is about the same. The big differences lay entirely in gameplay. The story moves along smoothly, and the transitions between chapters is consistent and logical. The story has virtually no holes or loose ends. The quests are long and interesting, assuring that no one will exhaust this cart in one or two sittings.

Like most 8-bit role-playing games, the story and action of this game tends to be a little on the young side. This is not to say the game is easy, just PG rated instead of R.

Dragon Warrior 4 represents some of the best role-playing action available for the NES. Anyone who has enjoyed the earlier installments won't want to miss this one. For those new to the series, **Dragon Warrior 4** is a great place to start.

— Marc Camron

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	78%
Sound	78%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	85%

Soldier Blade

TTI
TurboGrafx 16
1 Player

Soldier Blade is the newest of a long line of shooters from TTI. This one has the basic save-the-universe scenario, with many weapons and power-ups to help. The power-up



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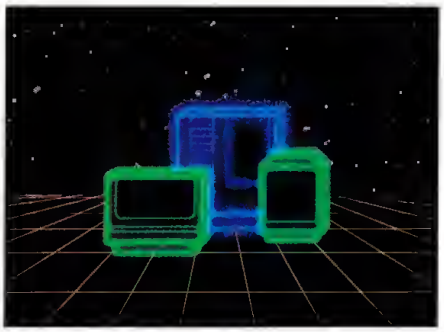




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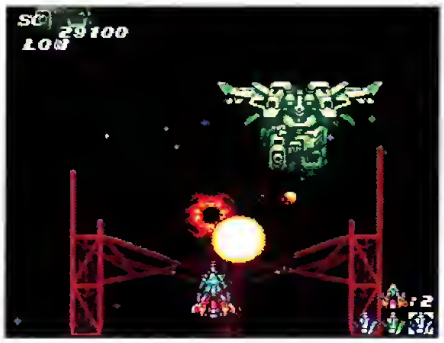
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

system is interesting. It uses different colored capsules in various combinations to provide many different weapons. Power-up one weapon or mix and match for many possibilities.

The scrolling speed varies from round to round and flows very smoothly. Although shooters are generally plagued by lots of slowdown and flicker, this game suffers only a slight flicker problem in a couple of places, and is hardly noticed. The music is typical but entertaining and matches the events on the screen.



While not offering anything new, Soldier Blade's action is intense.

This is not a bad shoot-'em-up; it has good graphics and the same decent sounds and music heard in other shooters, but that's about it. Fans of **Blazing Lasers, Super Star Soldier**, **Final Soldier** or the CD **Spriggan** will probably not be disappointed with this game, but they also will not be surprised. This entertainment touches on elements from all the games mentioned above but brings nothing new to give this one any special identity. Players who have never seen all those other games would probably give this cartridge a higher number, but it's actually the same old thing.

Shooter fans who feel like something in a known environment should give **Soldier Blade** a play through, but those who definitely want something new and different shouldn't bother with this one.

— Franklin Horowitz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	80%
Sound	75%
Playability	80%
OVERALL	78%

NCAA Basketball

Nintendo
SNES
1-2 Players

Most video games that draw upon sports themes for their inspiration and direction can usually be classified in one of two ways. Many attempt to mock the particular theme on which they're based by re-working an existing list of play mechanics and enhancing them with additional graphic detail, animation, and fine-tuning. The second type of video game simulation, however, seeks to better the genre by getting rid of the old and attempting something new. In short, they long to be revolutionary - in terms of both presentation and execution. NCAA Basketball most certainly falls into this class.

Delayed by its sale to Nintendo from designer/producer HAL America, NCAA has been successfully tweaked in the months since the switch was made. Problems with the artificial intelligence of the opposing computer players have been corrected for the most part, although the number of fouls remains low and charges to the basket can still be made with some skillful passing.

The real key to NCAA's appeal, however, is not the strength of its on-screen game, but rather the manner in which the five-on-five play is displayed. Instead of embracing the standard bird's-eye perspectives and horizontal or vertical scrolling playfields found in most video basketball, this game takes you down on the court with a scaling, rotating view of the play area.

Most of the play mechanics from regular b-ball are intact. The unique manner in which the game moves, leading players from one scaling side of the court, rotating the view, and then down to the other is impressive to say the least.



NCAA Basketball brings new views and moves to the video-court.

This special effects wizardry comes at a price though. Due to the limitations of the Mode 7 environment, the game takes place in a somewhat surreal arena surrounded by nothingness. Not only are there no crowds to cheer you on, there also aren't any bleachers, walls or signs of humanity to be seen.

Regardless of this cosmetic shortcoming, NCAA Basketball is long on looks and adequate in play. There remains little incentive to go for the three-point plays when it's just as easy to work the ball in close for the sure-fire jam. NCAA is a great addition to any video sports buff's collection and hopefully the starting point for a whole new generation of sports games.

— Shey Stevens

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	88%
Sound	75%
Playability	84%
OVERALL	83%

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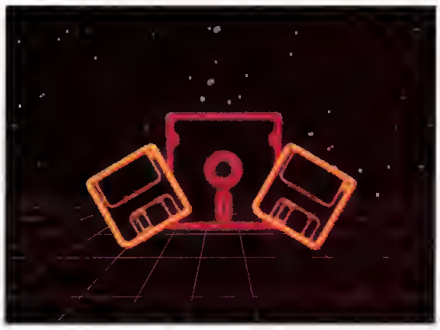
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SOFTWARE GALLERY

The Dagger of Amon Ra

Sierra On-Line, Inc.
Designed by: Bruce Balfour
MS-DOS
1 Player

An effective mystery involves an engaging story, hidden facts and information that fits into the story believably. Too many mysteries manage to avoid that delicate balance. The result is a series of facts and events that follows no logical pattern, yet explains the overall puzzle. The Dagger of Amon Ra is the latest Sierra game featuring Roberta Williams' amateur sleuth Laura Bow. Williams turned over the design seat to Bruce Balfour and instead worked as a creative consultant on the project, because of the demands on her time. Amon Ra fully tests the investigative abilities of the player, while weaving an intricate web of murder and intrigue during the Roaring '20's in New York City.

Laura Bow first appeared in The Colonel's Bequest. In **Amon Ra,** Laura steps off the train in New York City in 1926, promptly losing her bags to a thief and some money to a panhandler. Then things get worse.



The cast of characters in Dagger of Amon Ra is diverse and interesting.



Laura's first assignment as a cub reporter on the local newspaper is to investigate the disappearance of the priceless dagger of Amon Ra. After some preliminary investigating around the city, Laura attends a reception celebrating the new Egyptian exhibit at the Leyendecker museum. Here she can hunt suspects as the paper's new "society columnist." Unfortunately, dead bodies begin to turn up in the museum, so Laura must solve the mystery, catch the suspect and stay alive.

Amon Ra uses the standard Sierra interface with icons for game functions on a pop-up bar across the top of the screen. Close-up work with a magnifying glass found early in the game reveals many important clues. **Amon Ra** also takes a cue from Conquests of the Longbow by ending segments when key events take place.

Amon Ra is fair to sleuths, but it does test their observation skills in ways some players might find taxing. The story moves quickly in the later acts, culminating in the cat-and-mouse chase between the still-disguised killer and Laura. The game ends with a series of questions by the coroner that gives the player a chance to solve the mystery. Clues are obvious to the observant computer detective.

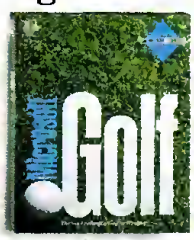
Laura's notebook is crucial to the investigation. As the player unearths new information or finds interesting objects, new entries appear under the PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS or MISC. headings in the notebook. The notebook's entries reveal the relationships between the characters and the background to much of the mystery. If a player gets stuck, rechecking the notebook for missed clues is advisable.

The graphics are elegant and reminiscent of J. C. Leyendecker, who lends his name to the game's museum and his style to its architecture. In a mystery game, detailed art is important so subtle clues aren't missed during the examination of dead bodies and crime scenes. **Amon Ra**'s artists pull off this depth and successfully bring the 1920's to life. Gruesome closeups of the deceased, illustrated the creative murder methods of the game.

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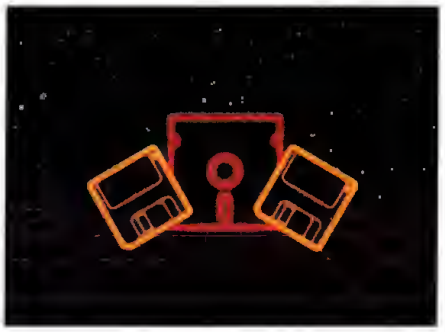
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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Eerie music and sound effects emphasize the frenzy of Laura's predicament and the horror of the ghastly murders. The speakeasy is complete with flappers, socialites, and music of the time, including the campy song, I Wanna Marry An Archaeologist. The atmosphere is rounded out with a museum guide book that is included in the game The book also contains interesting articles about real-life exhibits and scientific exploration.

Amon Ra both excites and challenges computer sleuths. The story keeps the player guessing throughout and the last act satisfyingly ties up the loose ends. Overall, this game is a well done and welcome sequel to the original.

— Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity Average	
Graphics	87%
Sound	84%
Playability	86%
OVERALL	85%

Prophecy of the Shadow

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
Designed by: Jaimi McEntire
MS-DOS
1 Player

Many players prefer single-character role-playing games (RPGs) because they don't have to attend to the inventories, spell books and statistics of multiple characters. Although it is certainly easier to look after a single character rather than an entire party, it is just as easy for that character to die, and the game to end without the resurrection that a magic-user in a party might provide. As the first recent non-AD&D fantasy adventure from SSI, **Prophecy** stands out as their nicest RPG since the mid-80s.

Prophecy does not provide much information about its goal, but it is evident that the player-character's master is dead and many strange happenings have occurred. The player later reveals a nefarious plot,



Prophesy of the Shadow offers an improved menu and interface.

confronts an evil wizard and saves a princess, with many puzzles and battles along the way.

The interface brings to mind recent **Ultimas,** with icon buttons for main game functions alongside the main picture window. Inventory, character profile, and text windows finish out the intuitive interface. The action buttons are used to perform tasks: look, talk, attack, magic, enter, drop item, search, use item, and rest. Search is necessary to find hidden objects. Talk brings up a list of topics. Players will understand how to control the game in minutes.

The main view is an overhead, single-scale view of the character and his surroundings. Close-up views pop up to show non-player characters, entrances to houses, and other details. If the player uses the proper magic, there's an overhead view of the land as well. Animation is smooth and fluid. The main focus of the game is the story and its exposition. Puzzles, combat and spell-casting help move the plot and take the player into secret places, dungeons, and buildings. It is a little to easy to move characters into dead ends though.

Graphics are particularly detailed and colorful. The monsters and characters stand out from the backgrounds, and each non-player character has a distinct look. Animated digitized photos of actors and actresses pop-up in the main window during conversations and add another level of cinematic detail. Music plays throughout the game, while many sound effects are scattered throughout to complement the graphics and animations.

Prophecy surpasses many of SSI's previous fantasy games and the new interface and graphics style are a welcome addition to the game. Hopefully SSI will continue with these. **Prophecy** is best for players of novice or intermediate skills, but RPG fans should be satisfied with its innovative plot, monsters, and challenges.

— Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity Easy	
Graphics	87%
Sound	88%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	85%

Grand Prix Unlimited

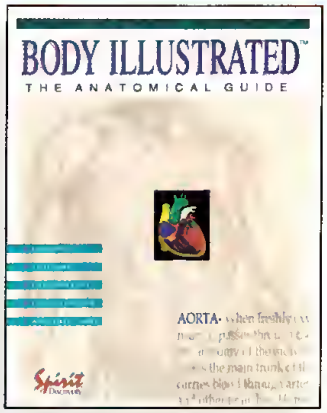
Accolade
Designed by: Tom Loughry
MS-DOS
Solitaire

To the uninitiated, all forms of automobile racing look the same. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. Formula I racing actually holds a closer kinship to drag-boat racing than it does to NASCAR. **Grand Prix Unlimited**, a product of Accolade's long-term affiliation with *Road & Track* magazine, seeks to clarify this common misconception.

After a stirring opening sequence that generates a "need for speed," players are presented with the main menu. From here, the gamer may

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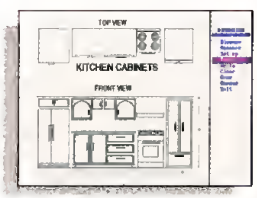
Designed to be fun and easy to use, BODY ILLUSTRATED is a visual and audio guide to exploring the human anatomy. BODY ILLUSTRATED examines hundreds of body parts from different views and is full of detailed illustrations with stunning realism. With just a click of the mouse, each part is explained in clear, non-technical language. A digitized voice provides the correct pronunciation of anatomical part names and "Instant Help" eliminates the need for fumbling with the manual.

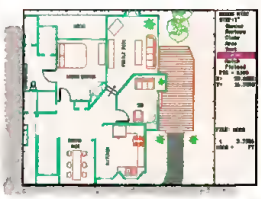
BODY ILLUSTRATED teaches either by lesson method or through the use of the game mode. It is an ideal study guide for junior high to college level students and a valuable reference tool. Instructors can easily use BODY ILLUSTRATED as an interactive anatomy teaching aid. Included in the box is a full-color anatomical parts poster and a written study guide.

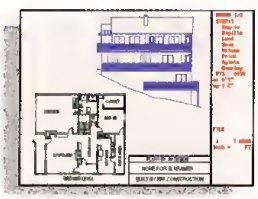
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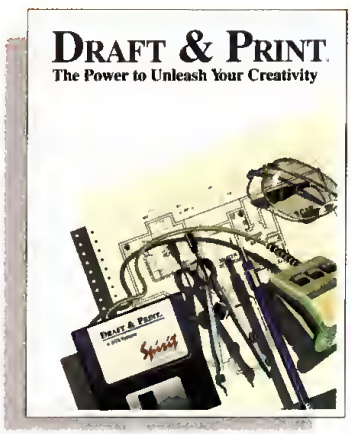






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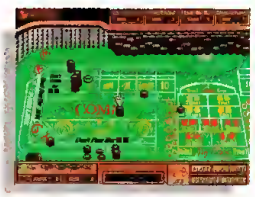
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SOFTWARE GALLERY

choose a tour of any track via an aerial fly over, practice, participation in any single race, or racing the entire grand prix circuit. (The 1990, '91 and '92 circuits are available.) Players join one of the five top Formula I teams, driving either the Williams Renault, McLaren Honda, Benetton Ford, Tyrell, or Ferrari. Each car is accurately modeled in terms of power curves, drag coefficiency and adjustable set-up parameters. Although each is capable of victory on any given day, players will never win a circuit without learning how to adjust each parameter for both track layout and ambient conditions.

The adjustable parameters are: View, Brakes, Steering Radius, Wings, Tires, and Gears. The first raises the driver's point of view to see more of the track ahead. Brakes may be altered from Soft to Hard in



Grand Prix Unlimited offers features like different weather conditions.

five increments, with the general rule of thumb being, the wetter the track, the softer the brakes should be set. Along those same lines, the wetter conditions dictate heavier treads versus slicks. Steering radius should remain in the center range except on tracks with torturous chicanes, where it should be set to very fast. Higher wing angles increase cornering speed but decrease top speed, making them a liability on tracks with long straightaways. Lower gear ratios generate greater acceleration (best for coming out of a curve) but lower top end speed (detrimental on long straightaways). Basically, players should analyze each track and develop their race strategy, then play with these parameters in practice to find the highest safe speed for qualifying.

In single race mode, players select the number of opponents, from one to sixteen (circuit races always have the max), as well as the skill level of the opposition, from novice to professional. The higher the level, the more difficult it is to pass, even if cars are a lap or more down. Players also have the option of manual or automatic shifting. Automatic centering will try to keep the player's car on the track if it is engaged, but it performs only minor adjustments and does not preclude the player from over-driving the curves and crashing.

GPU also offers a full-feature course architect that allows players to design their own track or modify those which came with the program. The design feature is well conceived and fairly intuitive, although occasional track misalignments occur.

The program features excellent digitized photographs of the cars during the menu selection process, adequate first person point of view during the race, and a limited replay feature. Crash sequences are disappointing: one crashes by hitting cameramen positioned along the course, yet certain walls can be driven through without effect. As to sound, the turbine whine offered as engine sound is both uninspired and annoying, and should be toggled off. Tire sounds, however, are necessary to gauge how much wear is occurring and plan pit stops accordingly. Finally, joystick control is sometimes too responsive, leading to wiggling on the straightaway, with an incumbent loss in speed and increase in tire wear.

Despite these minor shortfalls, **Grand Prix Unlimited** exposes the engineering behind successful Formula I teams and allows players tremendous flexibility in determining their destinies.

— Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity Average	
Graphics	67%
Sound	48%
Playability	85%
OVERALL	65%

Hong Kong Mahjong Pro

Electronic Arts
Designed by: Nine Dragons Software (Julian Robert Fitch)
MS-DOS
1 Player

Mahjong, a game of Chinese origins, is similar to gin rummy. Mahjong, the Chinese word for sparrow, is known to be thousands of years old, but its precise origin is lost in time. It was played in China under different rules in different provinces. In 1920, Joseph P. Babcock devised a set of rules for Occidental play, and imported the game to the United States. Under the trademark Mah-Jongg, it became immensely popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Later, the Japanese imported Mahjong, with variations on the rules, which are now regulated by the Japan Mahjong Association.

The People's Republic of China has outlawed Mahjong as a form of gambling, but a variety of it still survives in Hong Kong. Julian Roberts



Hong Kong Mahjong Pro is a great introduction for any new players.

Fitch developed a love for this version - which he claims is the original version - while traveling in Asia. As a result, Mr. Fitch formed Nine Dragons Software and assembled a team which included David Govett and George Sanger to develop the computer version of **Hong Kong Mahjong Pro**.

Mahjong is played with four people, selected from twelve computer opponents with skills ranging from below-average to expert. The square board in the center of the screen holds discards, while sets of pongs, kongs, and chows are displayed around the board in front of each player.

There are 144 Mahjong tiles, divided into six suits. Each player is dealt 13 tiles from a wall of tiles that surrounds the central board. A winning hand is composed of four sets and a single pair. The sets are straights, three tiles in numerical sequence called chows, three identical tiles called pongs, and four identical tiles called kongs. The instruction book and computer-based tutorial will have anyone playing this very complex game in just a few hours. The game can be totally mouse-controlled, but a less satisfactory keyboard-only control is available.

The graphics are super VGA, with digitized monochrome animation and 256-color still pictures of the three opponents that pop up during play. The animations are life-like and fluid, with little or no delay in game play. The sound support includes digitized music and digitized voices that make the play more realistic.

Hong Kong Mahjong Pro does an admirable job in teaching Mahjong to a novice, but minor flaws make the game difficult to play. The game manual's explanation of picking selections in game play is defective, as It does not provide for alternate choices. The correct way to pick an alternative chow is to answer no to the original chow selection, after which the computer will select another chow combination. Moves cannot be taken back in the game. Once a choice in play or game operation is made, there are no second chances. This could ruin an otherwise good game for someone just starting.

This program is a boon to partner-seeking mahjong lovers and an excellent teaching device for those who want to learn this classic game.

— Alfred C. Giovetti

RATING	
Complexity Average	
Graphics	91%
Sound	80%
Playability	72%
OVERALL	81%

Links 386 Pro

Access
Designed by: Vance Cook, Kevin Homer, Roger Carver
MS-DOS
Multi-Player

Links, the most successful golfing simulation of the modern gaming era, has outdone itself. **Links 386 Pro** not only sharpens the world's most visually stunning electronic golf game to Super-VGA intensity, it eliminates any remaining rough edges to produce a masterpiece of sports simulation.

Links 386 Pro takes advantage of the impressive capabilities of the new high-end PC computers. It requires a 386 system with a minimum CPU speed of 16MHz (33MHz is recommended), 2 MB of RAM memory (8 MB recommended), hard drive with 13 MB free space, mouse, Super VGA card and a 640x400 or 640x480 resolution, 256-color capable monitor. In return, a spectacle of sound, graphics and play options will boggle the brain of hardcore computer duffers. Multiple windows present views of the course from a variety of camera angles while simultaneously displaying data, including terrain profiles, club distance information, scorecard, etc. There's also a Saved Shot feature which allows users to replay their best swings, a Profile View which indicates changes in elevation between the ball and the pin, and the option of selecting a male or female surrogate golfer. There's even an option dubbed the "Record Game" which lets the user record a game and then play against themselves or another human opponent. Several pre-recorded games, shot by various members of the Access design team, are included in the basic package as sample opposition.

The graphics must be seen to be believed, with an amazing range of colors and textures, and extremely realistic-looking golfers. Backgrounds feature lush, varicolored trees, scenic waterways and other natural delights of the Harbour Town course included in the package. Also included is a program which converts the entire library of existing Links Course Disks to the 386 Pro format, improving the visual presentations in the process (though portions of the graphics will remain low-res). All future course disks will be produced in the new 386 format with hi-res versions of the existing disks (Torrey Pines, Bountiful, Firestone, Bay Hill, Pinehurst,



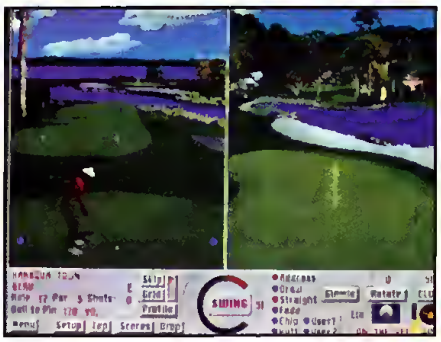


SOFTWRRE GRLLERY

Dorado Beach, Barton Creek and Troon North) already in development.

The higher CPU rate eliminates the major difficulty of the original Links: the slow speed at which some computers rendered the complex backgrounds. Veteran Linkers will be stunned and delighted by the speed of this new version.

The only feature commonly found in computer golf games that is not available in **Links 386 Pro** is a course construction kit, due largely to the incredibly sophisticated nature of the game engine. Short of that, however, it's hard to imagine this program failing to please any computer gamer, golf fan or not. The interface remains user friendly and the swing indicator has been fine tuned to allow more realistic, and more challenging, putting. Even the audio has been juiced up, with full



Links 386 Pro is one of the most realistic golf simulations to date.

SoundBlaster, SoundBlaster Pro, and AdLib compatibility in addition to Access' own RealSound audio.

Links 386 Pro is one of the most impressive releases of the year and an unquestioned must-have for golf fans.

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
	Complexity Average
Graphics	98%
Sound	90%
Playability	90%
OVERALL	93%

Team Yankee: Pacific Islands

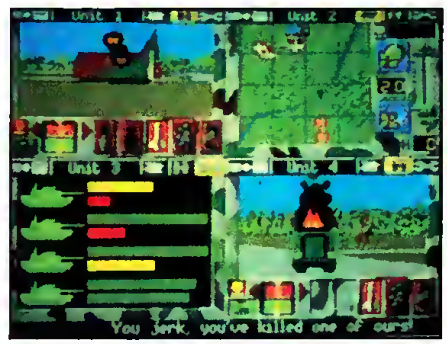
Designed by: Empire Simulation
MS-DOS
1 Player

Billed as a fast action, 3D real time tank simulation, **Team Yankee: Pacific Islands** promises much more than it delivers. The fictional premise involves Renegade Soviet communists, backed by North Korea, invading the Pacific atoll of Yama Yama. The rationale for this move is apparently irrelevant (perhaps the Black Sea resort towns just didn't cut it anymore) and the lack of any justification is indicative of the level of thought that went into the product development.

The player controls the tank platoon closest to the scene. The objective is to retake the five islands in the chain, during a series of twenty five interlinked scenarios. Players outfit and arm the platoon from a money pool, replenished throughout the game by completing objectives. Conversely, the player can be fined for damage to civilian targets. Although one questions the monetary assessment versus other punitive action, the system works as a game mechanic.

The design objective was to allow the player omniscient control of four independent tank squads, comprised of four vehicles each. Vehicle types are standard: M1 Abrams, M2 Bradleys, M113 APC's and ITV's. The screen is divided into four quadrants, one for each squad, allowing the player to jump from one to the other quickly. Within a quadrant, the player selects one of several displays for that squad: first person perspective, squad damage display, or an overhead map. All combat occurs on the former, with the player scanning the narrow window to spot enemy units against a busy background. Each round is individually targeted with a mouse controlled crosshair. Supporting such arms, as artillery barrages, smoke screens and defensive mine fields that are selected by the player at the beginning of each battle and activate automatically at the requested time. The map display provides limited intelligence on where each fixed objective is located, but complete intelligence on mobile units throughout the scenario, the reverse of reality.

As in **M-1 Tank Platoon,** units may be assigned objective areas, but Pacific provides no artificial intelligence so units not under player control can engage the enemy. Consequently, players are forced to select ammo type, target and fire for each of the sixteen vehicles.



Each of your four tank units can be viewed from the main screen.

The computer controlled units face no such restriction. In essence, the player is returning fire with one vehicle at a time, even if each of the four squads is engaged, and the computer merrily blasts away! The problem here is not simply the lack of realism, it makes the game decidedly unfair and unnecessarily difficult to the player.

Despite good intentions, this product has a malady common to many licensed conversions from other media; over extension and **mismanagement of the original idea. Team Yankee: Pacific Islands** suffers from an inadequate interface. Further, it is neither as realistic as Microprose's **M-1 Tank Platoon** or as engrossing

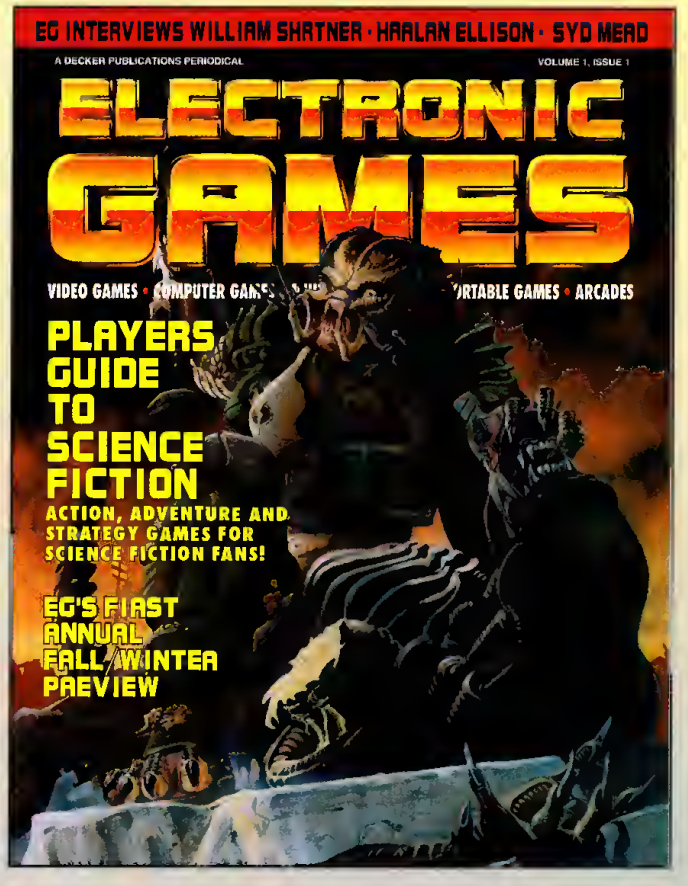
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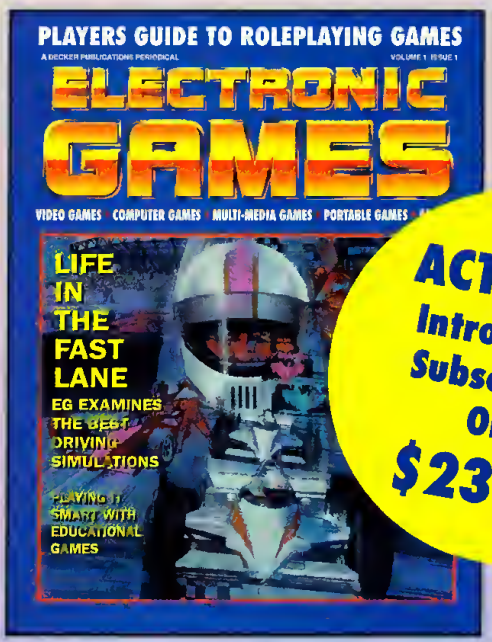
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as the quick hitting arcade action provided by Tom Loughry's **Steel Thunder**. Consequently, it is a hybrid design that will fail to capture the attention of either audience.

—Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	63%
Sound	44%
Playability	46%
OVERALL	45%

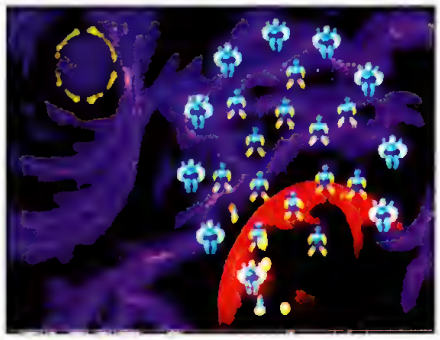
Super Space Invaders

Domark Software Ltd.
Designed by: Taito
MS-DOS
1-2 Players

Long, long ago, back in the dark ages of video game playing (okay, it was fourteen years ago), the world succumbed to an invasion. A bunch of funny looking little guys tromped their way down arcade and television screens all over the country, while millions of people sat cross-legged on the floor in front of the set and hammered on the fire button.

Space Invaders is back, 90's style. This shoot-em-up was one of the most popular games ever, and this version doesn't disappoint. Using the original game as a launching pad, Domark spins a yarn about an old arcade machine jettisoned into space early in the 21st century and picked up by an alien spaceship. A few decades later, the pixilated invaders have turned into real ones, and they're on their way to earth.

The gameplay is very similar to the original, and because of this, the use of a joystick or mouse is recommended. Ranks of aliens march down the screen, while the player shoots from the bottom. There are no bunkers to hide behind though; destruction of the spaceship at the top of the screen is the only way to get those, and other extras. There are twelve levels, with three waves of invaders in each. Although the earlier waves move in the well-known across-and-down formation, in the higher levels they move in circles, fill in blanks, and do all kinds of unexpected and unwelcome maneuvers designed to drive the player crazy, and annihilate the cannon.



Super Space Invaders welcomes the arcade classic to the nineties.

Another change from the original is the addition of two extra rounds, the Cattle Mutilation screen and the End of Level Guardian. The Cattle Mutilation is fairly easy, and very funny. The player must protect a

Villa Crespo Software's Coffee Break Series

There have been a number of budget software lines over the years, from Accolade's Avantage line to the very first titles from Mastertronic (the company that eventually became Virgin Games). None of these lines are around today for a variety of reasons, but the quest for bargain-priced software continues.

Dan Sejzer, president of Villa Crespo Software, the makers of the most sophisticated gambling software available, saw the market for budget software wide open. He took the idea, gave the games a singular packaging style and marketed them to all types of stores.

The **Coffee Break Series** offers software worth more than the low price tag ($12.95 each), and sets an example for compact packaging.

Here are brief reviews of four of the offerings in this series:

Amarillo Slim's 7 Card Stud
1 Player

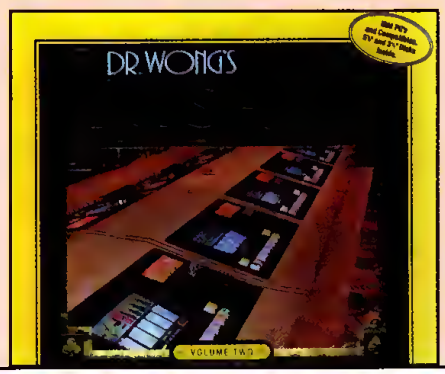
By far the most popular variation of poker, this scaled down version of **Amarillo Slim Dealer's Choice**, Villa Crespo's 28-variation poker simulation, has the same features that made its big brother so popular. **7 Card Stud** offers up to seven computer opponents and all the poker action players can stand. Particularly impressive are the help screens and detailed tutorials, standards in all Villa Crespo gambling simulations.

This help, plus the accumulated play statistics, makes **7 Card Stud** perfect for both novices player and the seasoned professionals who want to test their abilities. All game options are on screen; the manual is unnecessary except for installing the game.

7 Card Stud is lacking in graphics and sounds, but neither are very important for serious gambling games. The cards and menus are clear, and that's all that matters. **7 Card Stud** serves as a great introduction to poker, and worthy competition for pros.

Dr. Wong's Jacks+ Video Poker
1 Player

Jacks+ is another bite-size version of a Villa Crespo title, one of the many variations of the game in



herd of Holsteins from another herd of spaceships intent on carrying them off. Inevitably, a ship succeeds, and the cow and the ship rise into the sky. If the player fires and the missile hits the ship, the cow drops back to earth with a "Thanks!". If the cow is hit, it lets loose with a heartfelt "Ouch!". This is a bonus round, so the cannon can't be lost, but points are gained by the amount of cows saved from a fate worse than McDonalds.

The cannon can be destroyed, and quickly, by the Guardian in the other round. Every rank of levels has a different Guardian, each harder to destroy than the last. Fortunately they all have a soft spot.

The graphics are very good. The backgrounds are detailed and the invaders themselves, while maintaining the integrity of the original design, are denser and more three-dimensional. The background music is somewhat funky, as befits the subject, and of course there's the old familiar "whomp whomp whomp" as the critters make their way down the screen. The sound comes through on a monitor without a sound board, but naturally it's much better with one.

This is a terrific game, one likely to keep people glued to their PC's when they should be eating or sleeping. It's said, that when the original was released to video arcades, people would lie, cheat and steal to play. When it hit the home entertainment market, they spent their grocery money to buy it. It probably won't happen with this version—people are so sophisticated these days—but it's possible.

— Sara Slaymaker

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	87%
Sound	64%
Playability	93%
OVERALL	88%

Stanford Wong Video Poker. This jacks-or-better video poker simulation displays the payback schedule at the top of the screen and features casino-style graphics. It allows adjusted starting bankrolls to accommodate the fantasies of computer gamblers, accepts from one to five coins and rewards winning hands with sound effects and highlighted payback lines.

Jacks+ offers detailed help and an intelligent tutor for those unsure of which cards to hold and which ones to replace. This tutor really prepares players for a night of casino action. Turn off the lights and you just might feel like you're in Vegas.

Casino Craps
1 Player

This is the only version of craps currently available for home computers that has a detailed treatment of the game, and it's especially welcome since craps is a difficult game



to learn in a casino environment. It lets players learn on their computers with no loss of real money.

Casino Craps does not contain the help screens and Tutor of other Villa Crespo games, but it supports all betting options in the game, and keeps track of stats for the session and player's history. This could prove quite useful toward mastering the game. Graphics are simple and digitized sounds play through a Sound-Blaster. Still, the real attraction is the great value of this title.

On Target
1 - 2 players

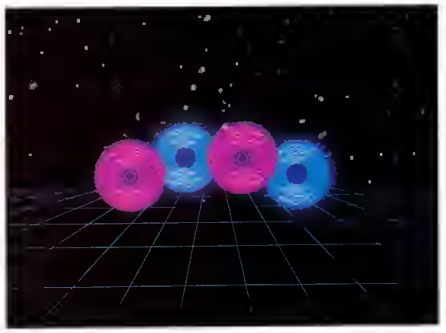
On Target is a simple artillery game, updated with detailed graphics and basic sound effects. This is the only game in the Coffee Break series that, because of its simplicity, might get overlooked. Game players of today like more sophisticated titles.



The object is to destroy the opponent's gun, by varying the shell speed and angle of the gunfire and gauging it against the location of the enemy and the wind speed and direction. The graphics are quite nice and the terrain differs from screen to screen, but the game moves too quickly against the computer opponent. It does work better as a two-player game. Unfortunately, **On Target** is really just too simple for most players taste.

— Russ Cecolla

GAMES	RATINGS				
	Complexity	Graphics	Sound	Playability	OVERALL
Amarillo Slim's 7-Card Stud	Average	44%	42%	84%	80%
Jacks + Video Poker	Easy	63%	67%	84%	85%
Casino Craps	Average	44%	60%	87%	80%
On Target	Easy	67%	44%	65%	70%



CD GALLERY

Stellar 7

Dynamix
Designed by: Damon Slye
MS-DOS CD
1 Player

Computer games that challenge as well as offer exciting action are indeed rare in this gaming craze dominated by video game mentality. **Stellar 7** has just the right blend of strategy and action to make people hungry for good action games once again. **Stellar 7** has itself gone through two facelifts: first to 256-color VGA and now to CD. The CD version of **Stellar 7** differs from the previous version only in the area of the sound effects and music, and the almost complete containment of the program on the CD. The hard disk is almost unnecessary. The CD **Stellar 7** is an example of how older games may be updated for CD and still retain their freshness.

Stellar 7 takes place, as the title suggests, on seven planets, each of which is more dangerous than the one before. An evil being named Gir Draxon has decided to take over the Earth. The player must drive him back to his own planet and, ultimately, defeat him in a one-on-one battle. **Stellar 7** has high replay value because players may approach strategy for each planet from a different direction and make use of the power-ups at different times. The player's vehicle is a sophisticated tank known as the Raven. The game is viewed out of the tanks window, and the landscape scrolls by as the tank moves along the surface of the planet.



The CD version of Steller 7 offers wonderful redone sound and music.

On each planet, the object is to destroy all of Draxon's defense vehicles — from the sandsleds and hovercraft to the enemy tanks and bird-like skimmers. A radar screen in the center of the control panel reveals enemy positions and gives the player a rough idea of how many enemy vehicles are left. More importantly, to the left of the radar display are power module icons. Active power modules have a different color than the others. Players earn power modules after the elimination of certain enemies and obstacles. Modules appear in the view screen, and passing through each new one adds it to the icon display. Players need only select the desired module to use its power. Powers include super cannons, cloaking shields and speed thrusters. A combination of strategy and correct module use enables the player to complete each planet.

Stellar 7 was an enjoyable game in its 256-color format, but really becomes even exciting with the intense music and sound effects offered by the CD format. The game may remind players of the arcade classic **Battlezone**, but that is only a similarity of style. **Stellar 7** is the ultimate first-person tank arcade game. Even its sequel, **Nova 9**, pales in comparison because it is so much more difficult than **Stellar 7**. The CD version of **Stellar 7** is not a game that would prompt someone to buy a CD drive, but it is certainly a nice update that takes advantage of the storage capacity of the CD and increases the enjoyment of the game.

— *Russ Ceccola*

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	82%
Sound	90%
Playability	78%
OVERALL	85%

The Lost Treasures of Infocom

Infocom/Activision
Designed by: Various Authors
MS-DOS CD
1 Player

Infocom led the adventure game field for many years back in the eighties, when text adventures were all the rage. Computer game fans anticipated the latest Infocom game as eagerly as horror fans await the newest Stephen King book. But it all came to an end; the old Infocom effectively dissolved after Activision/Mediagenic bought the company in 1988.

Early in 1992, Activision collected 20 of these great games into one package called **The Lost Treasures of Infocom**. Now that same

collection is available on a single CD. How ironic it is that the most bang for the buck in the CD format is a collection of games that originally ran on 64K computers, when CD technology was nowhere in sight!

Lost Treasures is a valuable CD package, both for the games collected and the other contents. It contains all of the **Zork** games, the **Enchanter Trilogy**, all of the Infocom mystery titles, **Planetfall**, **Stationfall**, **The Lurking Horror**, **Infidel**, **Starcross, Suspended** and **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy**. These are the best of Infocom's games. They will monopolize countless hours despite their age, because the stories at the heart of these works are captivating and enjoyable.

Besides the games themselves, **Lost Treasures** also comes with two huge books: the collected manuals and documentation for each game and the collected hint books for each title, all of which are long out of print.

Some CD collections copy all of the game files to the hard disk and run the game from there. Under these circumstances, the CD is nothing more than a replacement many game disks. Fortunately, all of the game files for **Lost Treasures** reside on the CD, with the hard disk only necessary for saving games.

Because most Infocom titles have no graphics or sound, the games can't take advantage of those benefits of the CD medium. Instead, Lost Treasures provides a nice and much needed bridge. One between the high-tech technologies of the nineties, and the origin of computer games from less than twenty years ago. These games should be remembered for the entertainment provided.

— Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	n/a
Sound	n/a
Playability	92%
OVERALL	90%

The Secret of Monkey Island

Lucasfilm Games
Designed by: Ron Gilbert
MS-DOS CD
One Player

This smooth-playing interactive graphics adventure, already available on floppy for MS-DOS, Macintosh and Amiga systems, is now available as a CD disk. The sound and graphics are excellent, even for multimedia, but this pirate yarn is pretty much unchanged from its original appearance. About the only innovation is the option to play it in French, German, Italian, and Spanish as well as English.

The young hero of the story, Guybrush Threewood, goes to the Caribbean in search of an adventurous life. He meets buccaneers and plunges into their secret world of dangers, high action, and boundless treasure.

The point-and-click interface is one of the simplest control systems ever designed. The user clicks on one of the command words in the lower left corner of the screen and then clicks on an object or person within the picture to trigger the desired action. Movement is especially easy, since the user need only point at the destination, and the characters walks there, by the quickest route.

The "talk to" command initiate conversation with non-player characters. Comments by people are printed on the screen. They're very legible, but slow readers may want to disable the Turbo feature, if they have one, so that the text doesn't shoot past too quickly.



This version of Monkey Island is basically the same as on disk.

When it's Guybrush's turn to speak, a menu of possible comments replaces the command word list at the bottom of the screen. Picking the right phrases is an essential part of the game, since the would-be pirate needs to gets lots of information from the many people whom he encounters.

The Secret of Monkey Island is a fine game, but it may disappoint those who'd hoped for a complete overhaul, as Lucas did with **Loom**.

— Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	85%
Playability	95%
OVERALL	88%



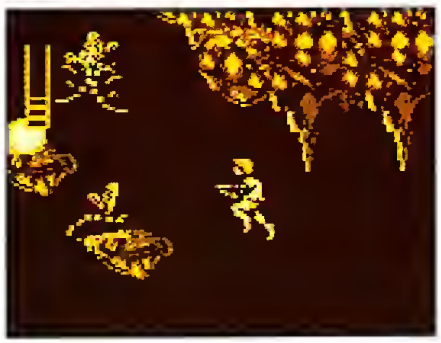


PORTABLE PLAYTIME

Star Wars

Capcom
GameBoy
1 Player

Give Capcom credit; not many publishers would have the guts to present an action-adventure retelling of the original *Star Wars* movie for the Game Boy. Actually, it's a little difficult to know where credit belongs, since **Star Wars** was developed by NMS Software, and was published by Ubi Soft outside the United States.



Capcom does an admirable job in bringing Star Wars to the GameBoy.

Whoever it was certainly gets points for thinking big. The ambitious concept boils down to a series of elementary arcade games, but the story is all there, from the opening cut scene when Darth Vader's Imperial Fighter hunts down a beleaguered Rebel Transport, to the destruction of the Death Star at the end.

The game begins after R2D2 and C-Threepio escape the captured rebel space ship and join the young dreamer Luke Skywalker. R2D2 has gone to seek Obi-wan Kenobe, and Luke chases after. In a top-down view of the land-speeder he drives to the game's first location, a cave near Luke's farm, where he must leap from rock to rock in a fairly insipid introductory contest. Not only is it dull, it is one of the few blatant deviations from the film's script. After a hop, skip and several jumps, Luke picks up a hand weapon and departs the caves. The purpose of this weapon is somewhat dubious; he's already carrying an apparently identical hand weapon when he enters the cave, where there is, in fact, nothing for him to shoot at.

It's back to the land-speeder and a top-down perspective drive through the Tatooine wastelands, to locate the Jawas' massive sandcrawler, where R2D2 is imprisoned. The game then reverts back to side-scrolling format as Luke searches for his wayward droid.

The game continues in this manner, stringing together side-scrolling, top-down, and even first-person perspective scenes (such as the climactic battle to blow up the Death Star) to create a mosaic adventure. The graphics are impressive, and several of the contests are actually pretty good.

Good, bad, or indifferent, the thread of the Star Wars saga holds this arcade-adventure together and, in terms of play value, there's a lot of gaming per dollar.

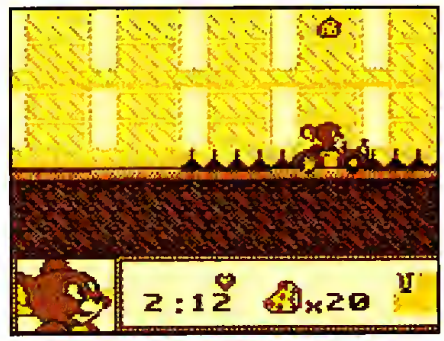
— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	92%
Playability	80%
OVERALL	87%

Tom & Jerry

Hi-Tech Expressions
GameBoy
1-2 Players

Tom & Jerry has been a cartoon classic for thirty years, so it's not surprising that the duo's antics would eventually be translated to other media. Hi-Tech Expression's **Tom & Jerry** preserves the fun of the original series in a horizontal-scrolling, run & jump game with Jerry as the protagonist and Tom as his faithful, ever present nemesis.



Tom and Jerry includes some lively features like Jerry's little toy car.

The title screen recreates the famous motif that opened the television series, and the musical score is indistinguishable from the original, within the limitations of the GameBoy's speaker. Jerry's mission is to find Tuffy (the baby mouse that pranced around in a diaper). Accomplishing that mission requires the completion of ten levels, which are split into three stages each. Completion of a stage yields a password so players can continue later.

Tom pops up throughout the game, but he is not the only obstacle Jerry faces. Other traps laid out

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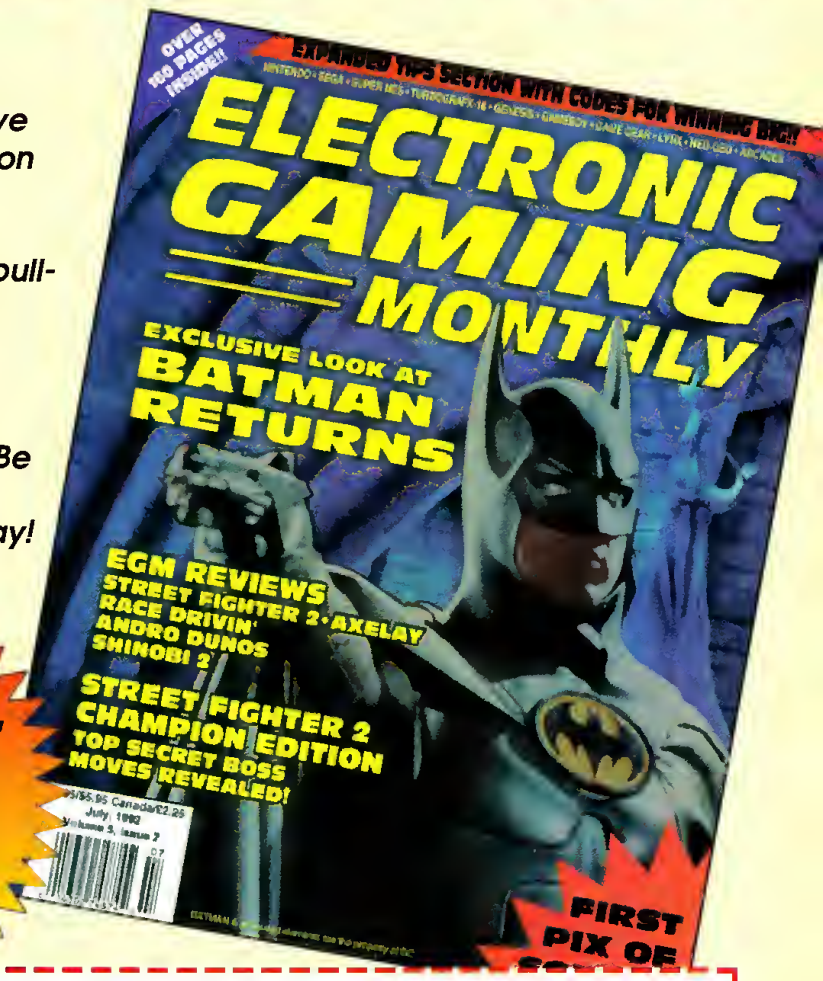
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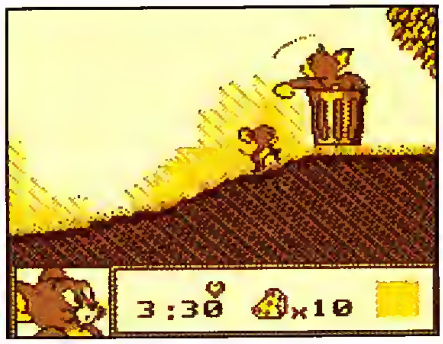
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PORTABLE PLAYTIME

include, mousetraps, man-holes, and pictures falling off the wall. Some are more esoteric, like the biting flowers in the park level.

In addition to running and jumping past opponents, Jerry can pick-up, and throw marbles. There are two marbles in every level that contains Tom. Jerry can also accumulate the cheese scattered through every level, and gain bonus points. There is an allotted time to complete each level, but players are less likely to run out of time than succumb to other pitfalls.



Tom may not be in every level, but he does appear, to give you trouble.

Search for objects everywhere, and jump as high as possible, as many of the bonuses are hidden out of reach, above Jerry's head.

Tom & Jerry sports a detailed game environment, superb graphics and sound, and is challenging enough to preclude quick mastery. Individual levels are crafted with imagination and dovetail nicely with one another to create a cohesive package. The game is decidedly less violent than the tv series, although some will miss the gruesome, but hilarious, sight of Tom's face flattened in the shape of an iron, skillet or some other implement. Most players will appreciate the opportunity to play "cat & mouse" with two of their favorite characters.

— Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	87%
Sound	94%
Playability	86%
OVERALL	87%

Smash TV

Flying Edge
Game Gear
1 Player

Acclaim has contracted the same strange malady that used to afflict Virgin Games; multiple corporate personalities. It manifests itself through the acquisition of smaller publishers and development houses. Then, instead of assimilating the new entities, the smaller company names are retained and added to its collection. Acclaim confuses consumers by flying under several flags, including Flying Edge. For the record, **Smash TV,** based on the Williams' arcade game, was developed by Probe Software for Flying Edge, a division of Acclaim.

The original coin-op, as well as the Super-NES conversion, were excellent examples of dressing up a classic game in brand new clothes and giving it a second, successful life. **Smash TV** is essentially a remake of Williams' own Robotron, with the character, viewed from an angled top-down perspective, battling attackers who swarm in on him from all sides. The updated version borrows a page from the film *The Running Man* and casts the character as a contestant in a deadly, futuristic game show, moving from arena to arena for each new round. The playfields contain a slew of deadly opponents, and randomly appearing bonus objects and power-ups, not to mention, an occasional land mine.



This version of Smash TV is action packed, but lacking in control.

The problem here is the play mechanic. To really enjoy a game like this, the player must control both the player-character's movement and the direction he's firing his weapon. In other words, he must be able to run left while firing down and so on. In the arcades, players use two controllers: one for movement, one for firing. On the Super-NES, the control pad moves the player surrogate while the four action buttons, fire up, down, left and right. On the Game Gear, however, there are only two action buttons. If the player is moving horizontally, one button fires left, the other right; if the player moves vertically, one button fires up and the other fires down. This is wholly unsatisfactory and makes a challenging game a frustrating one. Players should have the freedom of eight firing directions at once, not two, and without that freedom, the play suffers significantly.

The graphics are acceptable (especially considering the number of characters appearing simultaneously on-screen), but not outstanding, while the sound effects are just average for the Game Gear.

In short, as good as the original game was, **Smash TV** is just another average shooter on the Game Gear.

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	75%
Sound	70%
Playability	55%
OVERALL	65%

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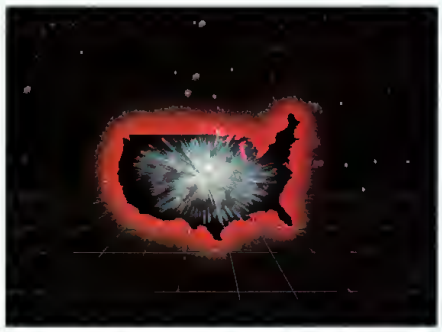
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FANDOM CENTRAL

How to Become a Fan Publisher

By Arnie Katz

It takes work, persistence, and an ability to handle rejection to become a professional gaming journalist, but the requirements for entering the exciting world of fanzines (amateur publications) are much more relaxed. If you're one of the dozens who've written to ask how to break into fanzining, this installment of "Fandom Central" is for you. All you need is an interest in electronic gaming, access to a means of copying, and enthusiasm. A functioning brain is a definite asset, though I occasionally get fanzines that may have been done without one.

Before typing the first article, conceptualize your fanzine. Most neofans (new fans) are hot to get started, but a little advance thought saves a lot of wasted work. What do you want to cover? Is there a unique slant you want to give the material? How frequent and how large will the fanzine be?

Looking at a few other fanzines can't hurt. It also avoids re-inventing the wheel in every first issue.

Beware of grandiose plans. You can always add pages or speed up the schedule later. Fandom is only a hobby, so don't take on more than you can do in spare time without sacrificing other interests.

Unless you already write for fanzines or belong to a local gaming group, you'll have to write the whole first issue. That's a blessing in disguise, because a fanzine should be a platform for its editor. A good first issue will often attract contributors.

It pays to revise your writing. There's no excuse for hasty writing, because fanzines don't have ironclad deadlines. Make sure the text includes a colophon: a small section that gives the title, editor, address, frequency, and price of the fanzine. People can't send for your masterpiece if they don't know how to contact you.

Many fanzines are slickly desktop published, but other methods can get the job done, too. Spirit duplicators and mimeographs are fairly cheap in used condition, and you'd be surprised how many schools and offices have idle ones sitting in storerooms and closets.

Desktop publishing is the easiest way to put out an electronic gaming fanzine, because it gives the editor maximum flexibility. Good page-layout software is readily available for all home computers. But if the price of **Publish It!**, **QuarkXPress**, or **Pagemaker**, to name three good choices, is too high, there's nothing wrong with producing the fanzine on a word processing platform.

Many fanzine editors fret about the mailing list. Generally, other fanzine editors will share their lists. After all, it's not a competition. The reviews in this column give addresses for fanzines with which you might like to trade.

Producing an entertaining and informative fanzine is a creative challenge, but it's not Mt. Everest. Thousands of people have enjoyed publishing fanzines. You could be the next one to get into the game.

That's enough about how to get into fanzines for this month. Let's look at some folks who've taken the plunge and their glorious creations.

The Shape of Gaming to Come #6
Edited by Darren A. Krolewski
12311 Conservation Trail
Utica, MI 48315.
Frequent. $1 per issue, 12 pages.

Evan Miller's "The Compact Disc: Spinning into the Future or Just Going in Circles?" is the main feature of this excellent fanzine's first annish (anniversary issue). Evan stays true to this publication's name with a piece that combines a good summary of CD activity to date with intelligent speculation about the future fate of multimedia entertainment.

Krolewski himself leads off the issue with his usual entertaining editorial. I like the way he comments on more than just games. His remarks about the Concern for Life and the Rodney King controversy give a welcome glimpse into Krolewski's personality. Other faneds please copy. The issue also contains video game reviews, opinion columns, and genuinely fascinating news notes. Some of the pictures came out too dark, but **The Shape of Gaming to Come** is still a nice-looking fanzine, and its excellent content makes it one of the hobby's stellar publications. EG hopes this will be only the first of many annishes.

Classic Systems & Games Monthly #7
Edited by Jeff Adkins
662 Edmond Ave.
Sreetsboro, OH 44241.
Monthly, $1.75 per issue, 30 pages.

If your heart beats faster at the mention of **Sewer Sam** for ColecoVision or **Smithereens** on the Odyssey2, send for this fanzine and meet some kindred souls. Those are

but two of the games of yesteryear covered in this very attractive, well-written issue which Adkins bills as his "Special Summer Edition." The editor contributes a "20 years ago" retrospective on Atari, and there's a column on cartridge collecting. **Classic Systems** isn't a pure nostalgia trip, though. Each gives solid information, like the detailed explanation of the difficulty levels included in the **Track 'n' Field** piece.

Despite a few unnecessary "pseudo-pro" trappings, Classic Systems is an appealing publication. It's especially recommended for those who own and still admire those old gaming machines.

Digital Press #6 & #7
Edited by Joe Santulli
29 Cupsaw Ave.
Ringwood, NJ 07456-2818
Bimonthly, $1.25 per issue
24 and 8 pages, respectively

Two issues of this fine video game fanzine are at hand. The larger one celebrates completion of a year of publication, while #7 reports the results of the DP scavenger hunt, in which Santulli challenged readers to find such items as a game magazine cover dated January 1985 and a classified ad trying to sell an Atari 2600. Reader Russ Perry won.

The usual content of **Digital Press** balances well-researched articles about old systems with news and reviews of 16-bit games. Santulli's writing style is relaxed, personable, and lucid, but the fanzine itself could use a dose of informality. The subscription ad on the inside back cover adds nothing to the zine and burns up a page that could have been used for something better.

My favorite piece in #6 is Santulli's study of oddball video games which includes his choices for the ten strangest titles of all time. All pieces are well-illustrated by cartoon artwork and black and white photos.

Santulli's abilities as a writer and editor seem to grow with each new issue of Digital Press. Fanzine connoisseurs don't want to miss future issues, because I've got a strong feeling that the best is yet to come from Mr. Santulli.

Zapp! #4
Edited by Scott Weller
134 Ten Rod Rd.
Exter, RI 02822.
Quarterly, $4.75/four issues
16 pages

Reviews of current computer and video games are the main course in this tasty fanzine. A solid editorial, a letter column, strategy section, two Craig Engler articles on virtual reality games, and a news column round out a very good issue.

Weller displays a little artistic talent with a decent cover cartoon and visually pleasing layout and graphics. Some might find the body text type a little overpowering, but fanzine editors should feel free to display their individual preference in this manner.

Weller and the other reviewers describe games well, but the analysis isn't quite as good. They tend to rate most games either very high or very low, whereas the majority of titles fall into the middle. That notwithstanding, **Zapp!** is definitely a fanzine on the rise, well worth a try.

Super NES Gamer #4
Edited by Eric Longdin
19 Vermont St.
Methuen, MA 01844
Bimonthly, $1 per issue, 19 pages

Fans of Nintendo's 16-bit system will appreciate the reviews, previews and hints in this highly enthusiastic video game fanzine. **Zelda 3** is the lead review, but there is also material on **Addams Family**, **Super Tennis**, and other recent carts. A rundown of the Super Scope 6 should help gamers decide whether to buy one for their own collections.

Super NES Gamer #4 is quite legible and neat, but Longdin will want to upgrade the zine's appearance in the future. Printing on both sides of the page, tighter proofreading, and slicker headlines would all improve the presentation.

Attention fanzine editors:
If you want your fanzine reviewed in **Electronic Games**, send your zine to:
Fandom Central
Arnie Katz
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

Join the Jury

Review a game and win games in EG's monthly contest!

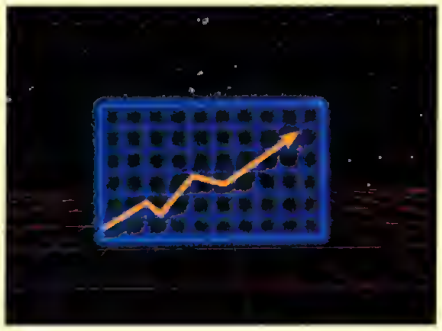
Each month, **Electronic Games**' critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. So for the first time in any gaming magazine, we're starting a monthly contest that will let you strut your stuff. We'll pick two games each month, one computer and one video, and challenge gamers to review them. Then, in "The Jury", EG will print the best ones. If we print your review, you will win a video or computer game of your choice! (Any system except Neo Geo.)

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the selected games.
2. Entrants can submit only one review of each game.
3. All submission become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's two best reviews (one in each division), as determined by **EG** editors, earn the writers a video or computer game of their choice. (Sorry, no Neo Geo carts.)
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Games for Contest #2:
Super Action Football (video game/Super NES)
Kyrandia (computer game)
Deadline for this month's contest:
November 1, 1992

Send entries to:
The Jury
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107



KUNKEL REPORT

Too Many Wizards!

By Bill Kunkel

If a Martian landed on Earth and had the misfortune of beaming down into a typical computer or video game software outlet (let's call it "Software World"), he would draw some very interesting, and profoundly misguided, conclusions about our planet's taste in entertainment.

Certainly the first thing that would strike him is that fantasy, particularly of the trolls, wizards, and dragons variety, is easily the most popular entertainment form on Earth. If this is the case, it would follow then that at least 70% of all books, movies, TV shows, rock albums, etc., should be focused on fantasy, based on the sampling taken at Software World, no?

Of course, once the Martian widened his database, he'd be astonished to learn that fantasy of all types has, at best, a cult genre following. Fantasy movies and TV shows are almost unheard of, compared to sitcoms, quiz shows, detective dramas and even fake courtroom shows.

In the literary world, fantasy books are a genre considerably smaller than, for example, science fiction or detective novels.

So why are game designers so obsessed with giving us dragons, wizards, and dungeons ad naseum?

"Because it sells."

I've heard that gem of logic many times in the dozen or so years I've covered this field. I heard it from Scott Adams, Magnetic Scrolls, Infocom, and a dozen other companies, generally about a year or so before each business failed because of its steadfast refusal to change or widen its perspective.

Fantasy is a cult subject. So why aren't designers creating, and, more importantly, why aren't publishers buying, adventures using other subject matter?



Wizards, both impressive and...not, have been cropping up everywhere.

Where is the epic western quest? Where is the war novelization? Where is the historical exploration?

With all the hex-grid wargames that have been produced, where is the story of a single unit, as in the old TV show Combat, in which each man has special skills to be used on specific missions behind enemy lines?

War stories and cowboy tales are only two of literally hundreds of alternative storylines that could be explored by software creators and publishers.

A quester's skills don't have to depend on his use of the longsword. How about his ability to shoot accurately, use a lariat, ride a horse, steer a ship, etc.?

No matter what skills are involved with the adventure, they could improve as the journey proceeds, much as skills improve with fantasy role-playing games. The characters met don't have to be a dotty old wizard or a Yoda-like elf; they could be anything and anyone, from any period in time.

The problem is that fantasy games have a ready-made audience, and in hard times, publishers cling to readymades. But if this business ever wants to expand its horizons it must forget about catering exclusively to hardcore brainbuster adventurers and start realizing that this medium is potentially, for everybody.

And as for those who think the computer software biz, where most of these fantasy adventures are peddled, is doing such a swell job, then riddle me this: how many PCs of the 286 to 486 variety do you suppose are nesting in American homes? (Think about the recent price dive.)

And, with that many computers in homes, why do publishers feel they've hit the jackpot every time a title sells 50,000 copies?

Maybe, if more folks came to earth out of their fantasies, the electronic game business would take on a new perspective.

Why are game designers so obsessed with giving us dragons, wizards and dungeons ad naseum? "Because it sells."

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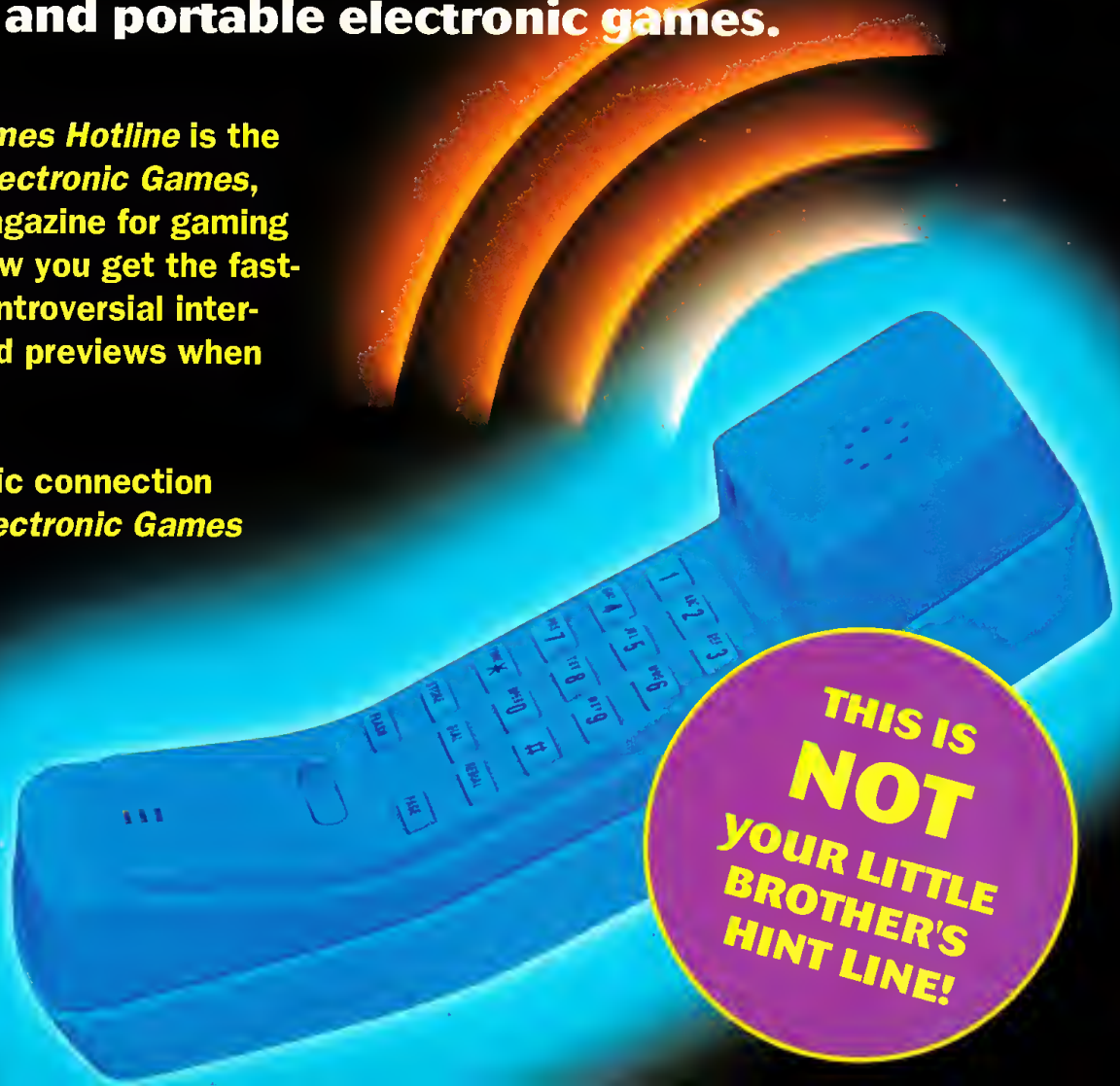
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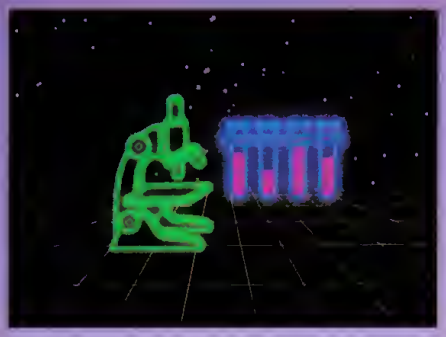
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TEST LAB

Beauty Is Only Skin Deep

By Ed Dille

Super NES Super Scope 6
Nintendo of America
SNES ($59.95)

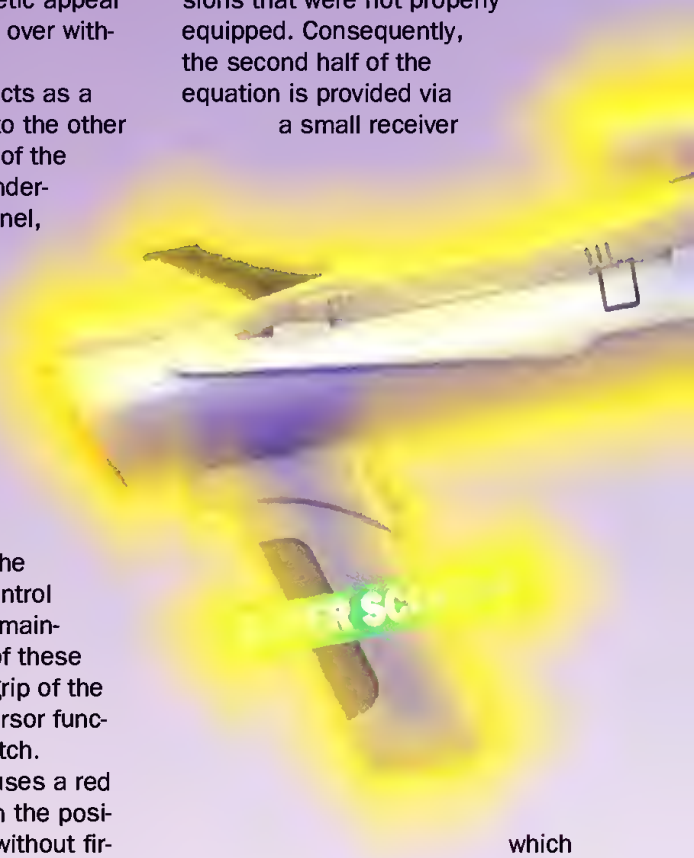
Peripheral mania is prevalent throughout the industry. Despite many significant increases in technology, packaging seems to be the key to the success or failure of new offerings, and the SNES Super Scope 6 is no exception. Veterans of the video gaming world will recognize that, despite some snazzy, Rambo-like styling and the fact that operates on a wireless remote, the SNES Super Scope 6 is nothing more than a reiteration of the original NES plastic handgun that came with the 8-bit version of **Duck Hunt**.

Operation is identical to remote control functions that have become second nature in the era of high-tech televisions, VCR's and, in some cases, satellite dishes. Disassembly of the unit reveals four standard circuit boards that integrate player input with an infrared light transmitter. The transmitter is housed behind a small black rectangle (exactly like that found on a remote control) on the front of the gun. The large opaque lens underneath has no function other than aesthetic appeal and can, in fact, be taped over without impeding play.

The first circuit board acts as a conduit to provide power to the other three boards. The largest of the other boards is housed underneath the main control panel, located on the top of the gun for manipulation by the player's off-hand. This circuit board controls the power switch (which may be positioned on, off or turbo), the fire button and the pause function. The power switch must be in the on or turbo position for control voltages to pass to the remaining two boards. The first of these is housed in the forward grip of the scope and controls the cursor function via a push button switch. Depressing the cursor causes a red dot to appear on screen in the position the player is aiming, without firing the gun.

The final circuit board contains the infrared light transmitter, which is mounted in the aforementioned position above the monocular lens.

An IR transmitter will not function without a receiver, just as a remote control will not work on older televisions that were not properly equipped. Consequently, the second half of the equation is provided via a small receiver which plugs into port two of the control deck and must be positioned within four inches of the television screen to work. The receiver discerns where the player's shot is, in relation to a preestablished zero point, based on it's position in the



...the SNES Super Scope 6 is nothing more than a reiteration of the original NES plastic handgun that came with the 8-bit version of Duck Hunt.

transmitted beam.

The zero, or target, point is established when the game is first turned on and is totally reliant on player input. A false zero can be entered by aiming at other than the center of the bullseye and confirming the aimpoint during the check phase. Doing so will cause all of the players shots to miss by the equivalent on screen distance of the entered error from the center of the bullseye. Naturally, it is not desirable to do so, but this illustrates that the receiver is a "dumb" instrument, containing no more magic than a reflective sign. If it's not in the beam of light, it serves no purpose. Receiver operation can also be confused by the concurrent use of an infrared remote control or can be "blinded" by concentrations of fluorescent lighting in the play area. The output of the receiver is processed by the control deck and game cartridge to produce an on-screen image of the shot, in the same fashion as that provided by any other input device.

The unit functions on 9 volts direct current, provided by 6 AA batteries. The operating life of the Super Scope is approximately 130 hours using alkaline and about 50 hours using manganese batteries. Naturally, these time frames are reduced through repeated use of the turbo and cursor functions. One note of caution, there are no warning functions to remind players to turn off the gun when they have finished a session (a beeper could have easily been included). As such, it is very easy to forget, particularly for younger players, who will return to find the batteries expended.

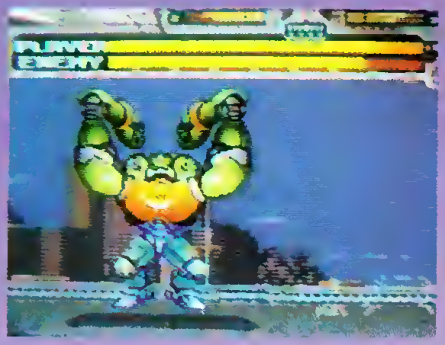




While not being bad, the games included with the scope get old fast.

Given the simplicity of the design, it could have been packaged as a hand held remote. Naturally, the molded plastic housing is not only more appealing to the targeted audience (players in the 6-16 range), it serves the purpose of justifying the price tag. Although some would argue that the Super Scope comes with a game cartridge containing six games, with a price equivalent to the cost of other single game cartridges, one must also consider the play value of the games included.

The first offerings on the cartridge are **Blastris A** and **B**, which are nothing more than **Tetris** clones where the player shoots falling blocks to change their position or color. A second segment, called **Lazer Blazer**, contains three space based shooting games subtitled **Intercept, Engage,** and **Confront**, which are only related by theme. Intercept is a static screen game with missiles appearing from right to left, that must be destroyed before completely crossing the screen. **Engage** is a very simplistic fighter chase game similar to **Afterburner,** except the player is again on a static screen with enemies appearing from left, right and dead ahead. Further, this segment is plagued by a very annoying screen flicker. **Confront** is another static shooter with enemies appearing in the distance as small targets and moving off screen to reappear closer, returning fire at the player. The best of the lot, by far, is **Mole Patrol**. This shooting game is based on the board and arcade games where gophers pop out of their holes at random and the player must hit them on the head with a mallet before they disappear again.



Battleclash is a good game, but the Super Scope needs many more.

Given the limited play value of the cartridge and the significant cost of the package, the success or failure of the Super Scope seems to depend on how many good titles are produced to support the product. At the time of publication, Nintendo has announced only one additional title, **Battleclash,** scheduled for November release.

Unless **Battleclash** becomes a runaway hit, or other developers obtain licenses from Nintendo to produce Super Scope titles, players must give careful consideration before investing in an expensive peripheral with such a limited library.

Gaming On Line...

A Look At America On-Line

By Ed Dille

American On Line
1200/2400 baud
$6.00 per hour plus phone connect

In recognition of the growing phenomena of electronic relationships, this column is devoted exclusively to national bulletin board services (BBS). Multi-player games will be the focus, although some coverage of the other gaming related features of each service will be included.

The term BBS has become somewhat of a misnomer, as it is rooted in the early days of telecommunications, when only one user would be on line at a time and the only method of communicating with other users was to post a message on the "bulletin board." Today's on line services raise connectivity to new heights, allowing two person chat modes, group conferences, and multi-player games of all sorts. The latter are exciting because they allow players from around the country, who never would have met otherwise, to either compete with one another, or to cooperate in pursuit of a common goal.



On Line gaming has come a long way since the days of the BBS.

America On Line has several multi-player games. The three most popular are AD&D's **Neverwinter Nights**, **Rabbitjack's Casino** and the **Bulls and Bears** stock game. **Neverwinter Nights** offers introductory level adventuring in the **Forgotten Realms** world. Players of the gold box series will recognize similarities with SSI's **Pool of Radiance** title. The major difference is that players are now able to band together, controlling only their individual character instead of the entire party. This changes the complexion of the game entirely, as character alignment becomes much more significant, and the division of booty more tense, depending on the personalities involved. Conversely, high level players may act as benefactors for newcomers, providing some beneficial weaponry or scrolls to increase their chances of survival. This promotes groups of varied skill levels as opposed to the somewhat homogenous ability level of a completely player-controlled party. Finally, the service maintains records for the Guild of Heroes and a "tavern" where players can brag to one another about their exploits. The software that controls the game is available for free download or, if players require a copy of the rules, may be ordered separately for a nominal fee.

Rabbitjack's Casino is a multi-player environment that offers Five-card Stud Poker, Blackjack, Bingo and Slot machines. All the games are excellently rendered and eminently playable, but Poker offers the greatest degree of interactivity. Computers simply don't bluff as well as human opponents, so there's nothing like competing against a real person.

Each player is limited in the amount of chips they can bring into the casino and, if they are winning, increments of their chips are bankrolled back to the cashier's cage, where they can be accessed later if needed. This precludes players who are entering a game from discovering the sharks. High stakes areas are offered and the game also supports a "Millionaire's Club" for the best players.

The **Bulls and Bears** game is based upon the actual market, providing players with a $100,000 stake to invest as they wish in either a Stocks and Options or a Stocks only game. There is an "Insider's Tips" area where information about real companies is discussed in a speculative way by the users themselves. Market prowess is subject to all of the real world concerns as actual stock tickers are used to evaluate the player's decisions.

A parallel module exists to establish actual brokerage accounts and invest with considerably more risk than is provided by the game portion. Fortunately for players, it is not possible to mistake one section for the other and lose the farm by accident.

A number of software publishers provide user support areas on America On Line. Among them are: Broderbund, Maxis, Microprose, Spectrum Holobyte, Strategic Simulations and Symatec. Users will find updates to existing titles, previews of new releases and helpful and hints. Finally, there is a large library of shareware that may be downloaded.



SSI, is modifying a series of AD&D adventures for American On-Line.

All these features and much more lead to only one conclusion: America On Line is a diverse, growing electronic community that will satisfy user needs.

NOT AVAILABLE ON NEWSSTANDS!

READ WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS...

- Jerry Walensenka
  Psygnasis
- Art V. Cestara Jr. & III
  Odyssey Software, Inc.
- Garry Kitchen
  Absalute Entertainment
- Rob Holmes
  Acclaim Entertainment, Inc.
- Neil Swarz
  MicraLeague Sparts
- Bill Stealy
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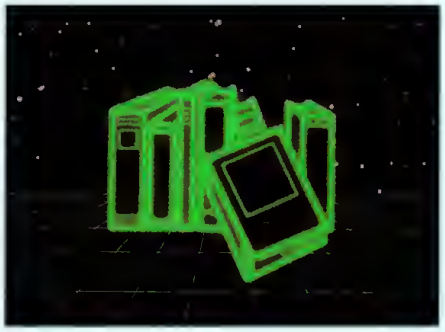
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LORE

Harpoon Battlebook: The Official Strategies & Tactics Guide

James DeGoey, Foreword by Tom Clancy, Introduction by Larry Bond, Prima Publishing Co., 300 pages (softbound), $18.95

Modern naval warfare is such an intricate science that the Navy's own tactical wargame, NAVTAG, couldn't be updated quickly enough to keep pace with reality. Professional naval officers must constantly study hard to keep up, to validate Sun Tzu's maxim: "know the enemy."

Pity then the poor gamer entering the Harpoon arena without the benefit of years of first-hand experience. Although Three-Sixty succeeded in making Harpoon accessible and playable to the novice, true mastery requires access to information unavailable through the game menus. Fortunately, **Harpoon Battlebook** fills this void with charts, tables, illustrations, and lucid prose.

The book is divided into three distinct parts. The first contains two scenario walkthroughs, fully illustrated with game screens, an expanded discussion of the scenario editor, and a thorough primer on strategy and tactics. Players who apply these lessons should see immediate improvement in the ability to detect, localize, and engage the enemy.

The second section deals with platforms, sensors and weapons systems. Players who understand the interrelationships of these systems can design better scenarios.

The third section consists of five segments. Three contain complete reference data on platforms, sensors and weapons systems, including previously undisclosed data. The fourth is devoted to all-new land based sensors and weapons data. The final segment is a comprehensive trouble shooting guide for versions of **Harpoon** for the PC, Macintosh and Amiga—a most welcome addition.



The book is only current through the third battleset, as the Indian Ocean battleset was released after its publication. Long-time players will soon have the opportunity to add 48 new, user-designed scenarios to their collection. Whether a salty veteran or boot ensign, players are advised to peruse **Harpoon Battlebook** before casting off once more. It's designed to aid "those in peril upon the sea" and it accomplishes that mission in fine fashion.

— Ed Dille

Super NES Game Secrets

Volume 2, Rusel DeMaria and Zach Meston, Prima Publishing, 364 pages (softbound), $9.99

Another in the series of "Secrets of the Games" hintbooks for Nintendo, Sega and Turbo Tech, this book is self-described as "The Unauthorized Edition" and emphasizes that it is not published by, authorized by, or in any way associated with Nintendo of America, Inc. It details 18 games for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, plus a few short tips on some others.

Games covered are: **The Addams Family, Arcana, Contra III: the Alien Wars, Final Fight, Lagoon, Legend of the Mystical Ninja, Legend of Zelda: a Link to the Past, Might and Magic II, Out of This World, The Rocketeer, Smash TV, Street Fighter II, Super Adventure Island, Super Mario World, Wanderers From Ys III, Wings 2, Xardion** and **Super Sports Games** with **Hole-In-One Golf, John Madden Football, Super Baseball Simulator 1.000, Super Tennis** and **True Golf Classics: Pebble Beach.**

One chapter is devoted to each game, leading off with what the game's about, the number of players, variations on scoring, lives, options, and special items.

Walkthroughs use maps and screen shots, but because they're all in black and white on uncoated paper, some details tend to get lost. However, many of those special "secrets"- the button sequences that can get the player extra lives, powers or even into hidden levels - are available.

— Ross Chamberlain

The Electronic Games Reader Poll

The editors of **Electronic Games** want to know about you, the reader, so that we can tailor the magazine to meet your particular needs. The monthly Reader Poll will let us know what aspects of the electronic gaming hobby are most interesting to you. We also want to know what you're playing, and to receive your vote for the most popular game programs each month.

Just circle your choices below, then send your poll sheet (or a photocopy if you prefer) to:
Electronic Games Reader Poll, 330 N. Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

Sex: Male Female
Age: Under 12 12-16 17-25 26-40 Over 40
Family Income: Under $20,000 $20,000-$39,000 $40,000-$60,000 Over $60,000
I regularly play: Video Games Computer Games Both
I spend _____ hours per week playing electronic games:
Under 2 2-5 6-10 More than 10
I spend under $_____ per week on computer and video games:
$2 $2-$5 $6-$10 More than $10

Please check all hardware you own or plan to buy in the next 12 months:

	OWN	PLAN TO BUY
Nintendo NES	____	____
Other 8 Bit Videogame	____	____
Genesis	____	____
Super NES	____	____
Turbo Grafx-16	____	____
Neo*Geo	____	____
Game Boy	____	____
Game Gear	____	____
Lynx	____	____
Amiga	____	____
Macintosh	____	____
MS-DOS Computer	____	____
Other (write in name) _____	____	____

I will____ will not___ buy a Multimedia gaming system in the next 12 months.

Please rate the following game subjects from 1 (no interest to me) to 10 (very interesting to me):

Science Fiction _____ Martial Arts _____
Fantasy _____ Mystery _____
Arcade _____ Military _____
Sports _____ Flight _____
Other (please write in category) _____

Please rate your interest in these types of electronic games from 1 (not interesting) to 10 (very interesting):

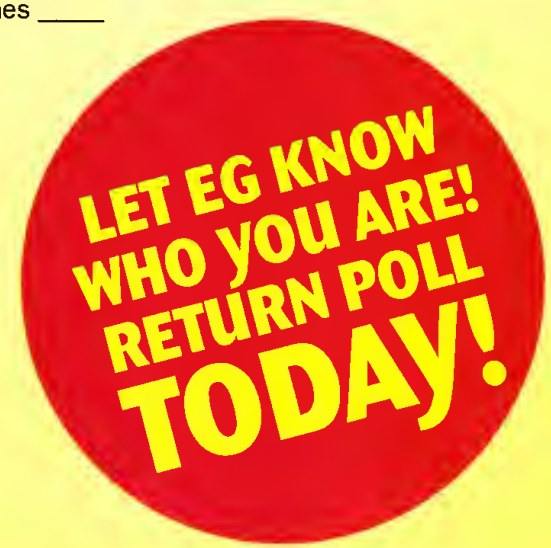
Video Games _____ Coin-Ops Games _____
Computer Games _____ MultiMedia Games _____

My favorite video games are:
1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite computer games are:
1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite multimedia game is:
1._____

My favorite coin-op game is:
1._____



Coming Attractions...

In the December Edition of Electronic Games

The Player's Guide to Electronic Gaming Systems

Hardware steps into the center stage in this all-out guide to the fun machines! **EG**'s editors size up the equipment in order to help you decide which ones belong on your Christmas wish list. Find out all about the graphics, audio, controllers, and – most import of all – the latest software.

Tunnell-Vision

Jeff Tunnell helped launch Dynamix, but now he's gone back to his roots as head of one of the field's most intriguing design/development teams. Russ Ceccola gets the whole story from this reclusive software genius. And wait'll you see **Incredible Machine**!

War in the Pacific!

Ten-*shun*! You don't have to be a hardcorps war gamer to get into the possibilities of conducting a strategic land, sea, and air war across Earth's mightiest ocean. Once an almost ignored subject, brain-games with a Pacific locale are scoring direct hits on the gaming market. Everyone covers war games, but we had military experts separate the good ones from the bad ones, to help you come out on the winning side.

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Super High Impact for Genesis brings the fast-paced action of the **BONE-CRUNCHING** arcade smash home. Choose from 18 hard-charging teams and over 30 plays, from a red dog blitz to a never-say-die super fly. "Yer Toast" if the HIT-O-METER rates your tackle "Dweeb", but you can settle the score with an all-out team brawl!

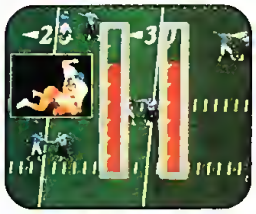
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BONE-CRUNCHING TACKLES!


OVER 30 OFFENSIVE ANO OEFENSIVE PLAYS!


SETTLE THE SCORE WITH AN ALL-OUT BRAWL!

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